The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. XLIII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1925 NUMBER 547

Contents

The Week 1

Editorials
- Progressivism vs. Democracy 5
- Psychological Depression 7

General Articles
- This Man Borah ..... Charles Merz 9
- What Next in Germany? ..... Frank H. Simonds 13
- The Dancing Bear ..... Frederic Nelson 15
- Amy Lowell ..... Robert Morss Lovett 17
- Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 18
- The Movie Director ..... Gilbert Seldes 19
- The Doom of Lulu ..... Edmund Wilson 20

Correspondence 21

Revivals ..... Robert Littell 22

Reviews of Books
- Brains and Lyrics ..... Babette Deutsch 23
- Grooming the Universe ..... C. E. Ayres 24
- Stories of New Russia ..... Betsy Greenebaum 25
- Mrs. Meynell ..... Henry B. Fuller 26

The Week

NINE European nations owe the United States a total of nearly seven billion dollars; and our government has sent them a polite round robin indicating that we should be pleased if they would initiate measures looking toward an arrangement as to the terms of repayment. The significance of this move is almost wholly political rather than financial. None of these countries can at present pay us much, and some can pay nothing. Our own official policy is to discourage imports through a high tariff which makes it very difficult for our debtors to create a credit balance here. The most important of the nine countries, France, feels no moral obligation to pay back the money she borrowed to "defend civilization"; she still hopes to link German reparations with payments to us, thereby giving us a stake in the execution of the Versailles treaty. This proposal, needless to say, is one our government will never accept. The significance of the American round robin is to be found by linking it to Mr. Houghton's first speech as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. In that speech he pointed out that huge private investments by Americans are still being made in Europe, that our government can exercise a considerable degree of influence in regard to them, and that this influence will be used in favor of "good" nations and against "bad" ones which refuse to accept pacific arrangements based—as such arrangements can only be based—on justice toward former foes. The round robin reminds Europe of the other half of the story: the United States has an interest, and a legitimate one, in the enormous military expenditures and the general bellicose policy, of some of the states which still owe us an aggregate of more than six billion dollars and are making no movement toward payment.

ALMOST everybody now admits that the chances of collecting the seven billions due America from her Continental associates in the War are virtually nil. Not one of the nine debtor nations is in a position to pay anything now, or in the reasonably near future. France is the richest of them all, but it is only by a tremendous effort that she makes a show of balancing her domestic budget—a deceptive show, when it comes to that. What good can come, then, of inviting them to discuss the question of their debts to America? It is conceivable that such a discussion may help to fix the attention of Europe and America on the more practical aspect of international relations. The ministers of finance may for a time become headliners, while the ministers of defense, offense, intrigue and revenge may be thrust into the small print of the back pages. This would be a desirable, if intangible result. As to the substance of the negotiations, settlements on paper may be made, like those with Poland and Finland. We may take them for what they are worth.

WAS it understood in America at the time when the loans were granted that collections on them would be virtually impossible? Not at all. Americans expected that the War would end in peace, with all Europe prepared to proceed energetically to the repair of the waste of war. The menace of German militarism was to be destroyed, and the other nations, assured of safety, were to be free to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

devote their fiscal resources to the works of peace instead of military preparations. A stable peace was expected to result in the lowering of the obstacles to trade and communication that hold most of Europe to a low level of efficiency and a miserable standard of living. If these dreams had been realized it would have been possible for the debtor nations to pay. They were not realized. Europe is maintaining more men under arms than ever before in time of peace. The fear of war rests more ominously on Europe than it did in 1913. The barriers to intercourse and trade have been raised, not lowered. For this state of affairs no country is wholly to blame; all countries, including the United States, share the responsibility. The financial result of it all, however, is that our European debtors have neither the ability nor the desire to pay. Fortunately we are making up our budgets independently of any expectations of payment.

ON MANY subjects we regard Senator William E. Borah as being chiefly right; but on one—the World Court—he seems to us chiefly wrong. His latest attack is because the Court gives advisory opinions to the Council of the League of Nations. Therefore, he argues, it is not a court but a political agency. It may and does serve, he thinks, as a Department of Justice for the League. If the Protocol of Geneva had been adopted we should have found ourselves, as members of the Court, thoroughly and deplorably entangled in European affairs. And so on. These statements are effectively answered, we think, by Professor Manley Hudson of the Harvard Law School in a letter to the New York Times. Professor Hudson points out that many courts have long been in the habit of offering advisory opinions to political bodies: the Supreme Court of the State of Massachusetts has done so for 140 years; and numerous other state supreme courts have the same function, which is shared by the Supreme Court of the Dominion of Canada. None of these has lost its legal standing, or become a mere political agency because of this function. The League has as its actual "Department of Justice" a special legal section, composed of eminent lawyers from Holland, Belgium, Great Britain, Spain and Colombia, which gives advice to the Council. Senator Borah is also in error in assuming that states not members of the League are excluded from the Court's jurisdiction. Germany and Turkey have been represented before it, and so was Hungary, before she joined the League. The Court has in fact rendered none but strictly legal opinions; it renders none secretly, and all are read out in open court before being even communicated to Geneva. In short, neither its history nor its theoretical basis justifies Mr. Borah's fear.

FIGURES of foreign trade for the month of April show that major economic adjustments have still to be made. Exports, totalling $400,000,000, were larger than for any April since the inflation year of 1920, while imports, at $349,000,000, were larger than for last year, but smaller than for April of 1923 and 1920. In part this signifies the increasing ability of Europe to consume and produce. But more significant is the excess of exports, amounting to $51,000,000, as against $22,000,000 in April last year and an import excess of $39,000,000 the year before. In the long run imports, visible and invisible, must balance exports. If we send out a surplus of goods we must eventually receive a surplus of gold or services. But just at present gold and most of the invisible items also show an export excess. During the eleven months ending May 1 our net gold shipments amounted to nearly $125,000,000. We send abroad a large balance of immigrants' remittances and tourists' expenditures. We do receive shipping and insurance services, but these would normally be far outbalanced by the interest owed us by Europe. Other countries are far more indebted to us for capital and interest than we are to them; they must eventually pay either in goods or gold or both, and this will produce an excess of imports—if we are paid. The fact that an import excess has not yet appeared is explicable only because Europe is still buying largely on credit, financed by large American loans and exports of capital. This cannot continue indefinitely, and the longer it continues the larger will be the reckoning. Just how the turn of the balance can occur, even now, without disorganizing world economy, is by no means clear.

EVERY sign of bad conscience was evinced by the National Retail Coal Merchants Association assembled in convention at Atlantic City. Speeches and resolutions expressed determined opposition to governmental interference of any sort in the industry. One is at a loss to explain why the coal men should have such a haunting fear of supervision under the present administration, with its announced policy of keeping hands off business, unless they are conscious that conditions in the industry are so chaotic that a formidable public demand for action is likely to arrive at any time. Antagonism was shown even towards a pending bill authorizing the regular collection by the government of accounting facts concerning costs, prices and margins. The reason assigned by the resolution for hostility to keeping official records of the industry's "private affairs" was that as a result of the experience with income tax publicity, business men "can have no permanent confidence in the ability or willingness of government bureaus to keep such information secret." Supposing this to be true, what of it? It looks as if the coal merchants were afraid of more revelations like those of the U. S. Coal Commission, which exposed enormous profits of anthracite owners and operators, and inexplicable variations of margins

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

among retailers. The coal industry is deeply affected with a public interest, and if its proprietors have anything to conceal, the sooner these secrets are revealed the better.

NOT long since, New York City was the scene of a great gathering of American and European city planning experts. It was an appropriate place to hold such a meeting, because the city is itself a horrible example of bad planning, land speculation and terrific overcrowding of transportation lines. Hardly had the convention hall been swept up after the delegates departed, before the New York newspapers were announcing with glad surprise that a single group of capitalists is about to build nine skyscrapers at once, all in a single small section. These skyscrapers are served by only three rapid transit lines, all of which are already overcrowded in a revolting and indecent manner. Twice a day a majority of the thousands of workers who will occupy these new buildings must squeeze themselves into trains which are packed as no one would dream of packing cattle cars. The collective intelligence of New York is evidently still a long way from even dreaming of the city planner's obvious and common sense remedy: which is, to require that these skyscrapers be built somewhere else, or scattered, or not at all.

THOUGH New York isn't yet profiting from the experience of the city planning conference, the country as a whole is likely to do so. It is good news that at a meeting in the metropolis last week steps were taken to form a national "garden city" association which will hold a conference next autumn, preliminary, it is hoped, to the creation of an actual demonstration community somewhere in America. Garden cities, most people now know, are towns planned in advance so that they may provide the most satisfactory combination possible of industrial activity and social and recreational aspects. Their chief features are the elimination of the land-speculator; a population more or less definitely limited in number; an encircling belt of agricultural land and the use of the utmost engineering skill in advance to determine the proper proportions and arrangements of land for factories, shops, houses, etc. Towns of this type are now in successful and profitable operation in England, thanks largely to the driving force and brilliant personality of Mr. Ebenezer Howard. So successful have they been, that the British government is now officially committed to the idea of building entirely new towns, as a solution of the problems of urban congestion and housing for the poorer classes. Those who are aware how much has been accomplished with small capital by such projects at the City Housing Corporation's development as Sunnyside, Long Island, will await with eagerness the first real "garden city" -with a flaming sword against the land-speculator at its gate—to be created in America.

THE suppression of adverse criticism by even the most benign autocracy can never be anything but ungracious. When the autocrat is a school teacher, however, suppression of contrary opinion becomes peculiarly hateful not only because of the peculiar powers wielded by a man who has only to tell his critic to sit down to choke him off completely, but more especially because schools are supposed to foster at least intellectual freedom. Because this supposition applies most directly of all to universities, they should be, of all bodies politic, the most reluctant to use any form of gag rule. For this reason the action of the President of Princeton University in suppressing an issue of the Nassau Literary Magazine was ill advised in the highest degree. The issue having been suppressed, no one is now able to judge what provocation the authorities of Princeton had. Consequently everyone must judge the case on the basis of abstract principle. A student in a university wrote certain articles which are said to have been scurrilous and are known to have been severely critical of the university. He was promptly suppressed in star chamber proceedings. So far as the general public can know, this means simply that offensive criticism is not tolerated at Princeton.

FAR from removing the odium of the suppression, the announcement that the offending student is suspected of insanity only deepens the suspicion which always attaches to autocratic acts. The charge of insanity is very serious. It not only calls in question the competence of the given offensive deed; it threatens the complete withdrawal of all civil rights including the right to manage one's own property or to enter into any contractual engagement such as marriage. So serious are its consequences, indeed, that no hospital for the treatment of mental diseases will accept a patient upon the diagnosis of only its own physicians. Yet, in spite of all this, President Hibben has allowed it to be given out that this young man is suspected of being unbalanced and that he will be permitted to remain in the university only if he submits to examination and treatment by a psychiatrist who (though he is a man of high standing) is a member of the faculty of Princeton University and a subordinate of President Hibben. This was a very grave mistake. Apart from all questions of discipline, if an undergraduate were suspected of mental disease the first requirement should be his examination by an independent psychiatrist. By designating Professor Paton in this connection President Hibben has placed Professor Paton in a most embarrassing position. By making his ruling public he has done the student a very grave wrong, quite incommensurate with any undergraduate misdemeanor.

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN is probably the most persistent man alive. His record of political defeat is without parallel in our history. It has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brought him an unprecedented volume of ridicule, quite natural to a people who worship success. Yet his perennial reappearance is an axiom of Democratic politics. Aside from politics his one public interest is the religious creed of his evangelical forebears. Within his lifetime the advance of science and the growth of the mechanical arts have made it as certain as anything can be in this uncertain world that the articles of that simple creed cannot stand. Either they must be greatly modified or they will be abandoned. Both processes are going on—visible to all beholders. Faced with this situation Mr. Bryan has not shrunk from associating himself with the most backward elements of the population in the attempt to erect a wall against modern civilization. His recent offer of his services as a volunteer member of the prosecution of a Tennessee schoolmaster under the anti-evolution law is simply Bryanism unabashed. Mr. Bryan helped to pass the law that makes Tennessee safe for Genesis, and Mr. Bryan has never changed his mind.

IT IS also characteristic of Mr. Bryan's methods. For many years he has made a practice of "discussing" the issue of evolution and divine creation with his critics. But his notion of discussion is that of a criminal lawyer. Only a few days ago one of these discussions was reported in the daily press, this time at Brown University. It seems that one young man presented Mr. Bryan with a rather sweeping question to which the Great Commoner made the sarcastic answer that in view of the apparent wisdom of his questioner he would resign the platform, leaving the student to lecture upon the subject. Another of his arguments, reported on this and many other occasions, consists in flourishing his various degrees before his audience with the offer to match academic laurels "with any son of an ape." Outside Tennessee such a performance requires no comment. Everyone who ever attended a college commencement knows that an honorary degree is no evidence of scholarship. Inside Tennessee, where Prof. J. T. Scopes is shortly to be tried for the crime of teaching evolution, such arguments can best be answered not by scientists nor by educated theologians but by criminal lawyers. Accordingly Mr. Dudley Field Malone and Mr. Clarence Darrow have offered their services to the defense. A rumor has been published to the effect that Mr. H. G. Wells has also volunteered his eloquence in the defense of enlightenment. But his interest is wrongly placed. This is to be a struggle not of ideas but of jury-moving skill. The lawyers are Mr. Bryan's appropriate and well deserved opponents.

DEAR, dear! Where will the pernicious taint of Bolshevism show its head next? Of all organizations in the country, would you not have thought that the National Patriotic Council, headed by Mrs. Noble Newport Potts, was probably most exempt? And of all individuals, would not Brigadier General Amos A. Fries, of the Chemical Warfare Service, have seemed most remote from Muscovite propaganda? Yet it was none other than the General, speaking nowhere but at a meeting of the veritable Council itself, who demanded that America "hold fast to the teachings of Washington, Franklin and Jefferson." We pass over the matter of Washington's sulphurous vocabulary, certainly no proper example for the cohorts of Mrs. Noble Potts; we ignore Franklin's fame as the Wild Youth of his day, the darling of the Philadelphia flappers; and we only remind you that Jefferson was an advocate of at least one successful violent revolution every ten years or so for the United States, as a desirable thunder shower to clear the political air. Are such gentry as these fit examples to hold up before the Constitution Worshippers? We trow not and with righteous complacence we refer General Fries to the untender mercies of that dwindling band of nation-saviors who continue to earn their living by clapping the label of Bolshevism on everybody who shows any glimmerings of a mental attitude other than completely troglodytic.

OUR notion of a hard job is that of the man who writes the new and final chapters of the text books of history used in the schools of Great Britain—assuming, that is, that these texts like our own are required to prove that whatever the existing government wants is right. Since the Lloyd George cabinet fell, England has flopped from free trade to protection, back to free trade, and back to protection again. The McKenna duties are about to go into effect once more; and naturally, importers of dutiable goods have been stocking up against the rise. Among these items are foreign-made automobiles, as to which we cannot resist quoting a passage from a recent dispatch to the New York Times which writes its own moral:

> The period that has elapsed since the McKenna duties were removed is characterized as the most prosperous and most progressive in the history of *Great Britain's* motor industry. [Italics ours.] British manufacturers were forced to lower the price of their machines and for the first time some middle class Englishmen could afford to buy the better grade of cars manufactured here. The prosperity that resulted from the increased sale of motor cars . . . reached into the country and into small towns, particularly because of the English habit of getting away from the cities for long week ends.

THERE are two outstanding tendencies in American journalism. One is the consolidation of newspapers to reduce competition. The other is the rapid rise of the tabloid "picture paper," of which the most successful examples are intended for an only semi-literate audience. It fell to the lot of Mr. Cyrus H. K. Curtis recently to illustrate both these tendencies in a single day, when he announced that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he had bought the Philadelphia North American to merge with his Public Ledger, and that he would start a morning picture tabloid, to be called The Sun. Mr. Curtis used the customary verb, "to merge"; but actually in every such case the paper bought is of course simply suppressed. The net result to the people of Philadelphia, therefore, is that they lose one fairly intelligent, long-established daily and they gain one picture tabloid. Needless to say, the latter will not be of the gutter type. Mr. Curtis's flair, in daily journalism, is for respectable dullness, not for sensational vulgarity.

MR. CURTIS and Mr. Frank A. Munsey are strikingly alike, as publishers. Both have been successful as magazine owners—Mr. Curtis, extraordinarily so. Both are fascinated by newspaper publishing, and both do it very badly, viewed by the ordinary standards of technical achievement. Their papers are dull, conventional, and not so much dispirited as spiritless. Mr. Munsey, with money secured in other fields of endeavor, has "bought" many hundreds of thousands of readers, only to see them slip through his fingers again; Mr. Curtis with all his huge resources has obtained only unimportant circulations for his Philadelphia Ledgers, morning and evening, and for the New York Evening Post. Timidity and colorlessness may be positive assets in a magazine man; magazines are read for amusement, and personality in the entrepreneur is no more necessary than it is in the manager of a vaudeville theatre. But the newspaper proprietor is like a stump speaker; he must have a passion for something if he is to gain an audience. He need not be a crusader: Mr. Adolph Ochs of the hugely successful New York Times is as conservative as Mr. Munsey and Mr. Curtis; but he is passionate about the news, whereas they are passionate only about profits.

Progressivism vs. Democracy

PROGRESSIVES who are seeking by means of popular agitation radically to alter political or social institutions and practices would do well to weigh carefully the warning which Mr. Frederic Nelson utters on another page of this issue. They have usually assumed that, in their contest with the vested interests of society, they enjoyed at least one permanent advantage. They could depend on the tendency of a fluid public opinion to move in the direction of the truth. If their objections to the existing conduct of public affairs were well taken and if their programs of reform were well devised, persistent and skillful agitation would surely persuade a majority of the voters to agree with them. Public discussion normally resulted in popular enlightenment. Mr. Nelson challenges this assumption. He contends that, as things now are, it is quite possible for vested interests, who according to the assumption are opposing desirable reforms, to beat progressive agitators at their own game of molding public opinion.

The reformers, in spite of the unhampered, assiduous and effective public presentation of an issue, may be incapable of bringing home to popular opinion what from their point of view the issue really is. Public discussion, as it is now practiced, results as frequently in popular mystification as in popular enlightenment. The stream of opinion does purify itself in the running. The kind of propaganda which defends and encourages economic and political inertia is even more likely to be effective than the kind of propaganda which promotes laborious progress. In all industrialized communities, but particularly in the United States, the conservative propagandist enjoys permanent advantages over his radical opponent. The vested interests are able, it would appear, to fool so many of the people so much of the time that they do not have to put up with any reforms to which they are generally or seriously opposed.

Mr. Nelson's contention is, we believe, substantially true. In so far as economic and social progress depends chiefly on the conversion of the ordinary voter to a radical administrative and legislative program by means of political agitation, economic and social progress will be scarce and slow. In this respect times *have* changed. During the chiefly political controversies of the nineteenth century the radical agitator who sought to extend the suffrage, or get rid of some obstacle to government by the people, held the whip hand over his conservative opponents. All the popular prejudices operated in favor of the democratic politician who glorified and proposed to extend popular government. But in the case of more largely economic controversies of today his successor can no longer beguile the voter by the very nature of his proposals. Although he may seek to take economic power away from the wealthy minority and confer it on the more numerous wage-earners and farmers, he finds it more difficult to convince voters of the existence of economic than of political grievances—more difficult to convince them of the desirability of increasing popular economic than popular political power. In relation to economic issues, the ordinary voter is more prone to be timid, credulous and afraid to use his mind. His own economic position is usually precarious. A period of bad business, unemployment, or social instability may plunge himself and his family into destitution. He can, consequently, be easily reached on the side of his fears. He is more afraid of the privation which industrial depression may inflict on him than he is hopeful of the benefit which he will receive from the attempt to increase his own well-being by legislation. If he is a wage-earner, he prefers to risk a strike for some improvement in hours, conditions, or wages than to vote for a candidate who proposes to alter the existing economic system for his supposed benefit.

The people whose interests are opposed to any

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

redistribution of economic power have become aware of the timidity and suggestibility of the ordinary voter in dealing with serious economic issues. The Presidential election in the United States and the general election in Great Britain were most illuminating examples of the existing ability of Conservatives to convert the fears and the credulity of the electorate into bulwarks of economic privilege. Their huge resources enable them to employ with increasing effect a steadily improving machinery of publicity. They can flood the popular mind with muddy propaganda whenever they think it worth while. They thought it worth while in the case of such an apparently harmless piece of social legislation as the Federal Child Labor Amendment, which they represented as the grant to Congress of unprecedented and outrageous authority over domestic life in the interest of a Bolshevik nationalization of children. It was one of the most unscrupulous and successful examples of fooling and scaring the people which public opinion in a democracy has ever permitted. What they have done in this instance, they will continue to do on all necessary and appropriate occasions. Conservatives are proving to be far more successful practitioners of the arts of the demagogue than their opponents have ever been.

For that reason they are, as Mr. Nelson points out, coming to favor an increase in direct popular government. He illustrates his contention by calling attention to the approval which British Conservatives are extending to the idea of subjecting acts of Parliament to a popular referendum. American politics offers a better example. Senator Wadsworth has introduced into Congress an amendment to the Constitution which proposes the ratification of future amendments by popular vote in the several states instead of by the legislature. It will be inconsistent for democratic progressives to contest this proposal. Should they do so, they will testify to a lack of faith in what has been the major article of their political creed—that is, the utmost possible participation by the people in the work of government. Yet the revision in this respect of the Federal Constitution will add incalculably to the future difficulty of amending that Instrument. No proposed amendment could thereafter be ratified without an enormously expensive popular agitation carried on in every state of the Union; and in conducting such an agitation the opponents of the proposed change would possess all the advantages of position. In that case amendments such as those for the benefit of child labor or votes for women would not have a chance. It would take a convulsion of popular opinion amounting almost to a revolution to effect the modification of any really important provision of the Constitution.

The predicament which the Wadsworth Amendment creates for progressives certainly provides them with food for thought. A sharp discrepancy is emerging between government by the people and progressive political agitation. Fifteen years ago the group to which Senator Wadsworth belongs opposed the election of United States senators by popular vote. Progressives favored it and inserted it in the Constitution. Today conservatives like Senator Wadsworth favor the proposed reference of amendments to popular vote, while progressives will regard it with profound misgivings. The conservatives have come to favor direct popular government, not because they believe in it, but because it enables them to place obstacles in the path of progressive legislation. They feel confident in their ability to invoke democracy in order to checkmate progressivism. Progressives, on the other hand, while they talk as if they still believed that the cure for the ills of democracy was, as some of them used to say, more democracy, really count upon representative rather than upon direct government for the accomplishment of their purposes. They have lost their former confidence in the ability of progressive agitators to convince popular opinion of the desirability of radical changes in the institutions and practices of contemporary society.

Mr. Frederic Nelson winds up his arraignment of the forces which now mold public opinion with a call to battle "for the preservation and spread of culture, tolerance, decency and the critical spirit." "The bravest Wesleyan zeal," he declares, "is the one thing which can save—not so much George F. Babbitt from the sloughs of Philistia—but you and me and even H. L. Mencken from jail or hanging." We agree as to the necessity of a declaration of war on behalf of the critical spirit or whatever it is in human beings which may lead them to seek the fulfillment of themselves and other people by the light of truth, but we doubt very much whether it will be as salutary as Mr. Nelson insists to "burn with tremendous passion for the evangelization of Demos." Progressives of all kinds, by which we mean the minority who would transform traditional institutions and practices in the service of some vision of the good life, have a more difficult task ahead of them than the evangelization of Demos. Their difficulty arises from their misunderstanding of what it means to evangelize and what they can do about it. They have never adopted the perfectly reasonable precaution of beginning the evangelization of Demos with a modest attempt really to evangelize themselves.

Progressives have themselves to blame in part for the ability of the conservatives to turn their cherished weapon of propaganda and agitation against them. In spite of their manifest dependence for the success of progressive agitation upon the ability of public opinion to discriminate the more from the less true and to recognize and prefer intellectual honesty, their own technique in agitation has not usually been much superior to the technique which is now being so successfully used by conservatives. They themselves have frequently been as propagandist in spirit, as intolerant and unfair in their treatment of their opponents, and as impatient of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

individual reservations and departures, as are the conservative demagogues. They have never conscientiously considered how popular agitation ought to be conducted if it is to become the efficient promoter of radical improvements in social institutions and practices. Progressive principles or programs are not revealed or self-sufficient truths which realize themselves as an automatic consequence of being proclaimed and believed, and which their advocates are entitled to impose on society by appeals to the prejudices and passions of those who benefit by them. They are experiments in social attitudes and practices which are mischievous unless they are operated by human beings who have acquired the technical competence, the balanced judgment and the moral patience which are required in order to prove their functional value in a real world. The existing superiority of conservatives in conducting propaganda is an indirect result of the fact that they are the operators of a going concern which is manned by a well trained and self-satisfied crew, and which manages to go chiefly by its own momentum. It is easy to rationalize inertia. It is necessary to achieve progress by a sustained effort of moral imagination.

This superiority may give to the conservatives almost a monopoly of political power in this country for a long time to come, but it is nevertheless a superiority which progressives would do well neither to fear nor to envy. It merely defines for them the scope of their task. They will never drive the conservatives from power by propaganda, for propaganda is based on foregone conclusions, and conclusions are the intellectual aids and the moral comforters of conservatism. Progressivism is the social philosophy of human beings who retain the freedom to make new choices whenever the situation warrants, and who to that end cultivate suspended judgment and an assiduous watchfulness of their personal and social experience. Progressives exist wherever individuals and groups examine and record a process of behavior for the sake of learning how it is going. Individuals or social groups cannot be persuaded or forced or exhorted to assume progressiveness. Progressive human beings emerge out of progressive activities. They will have the opportunity of taking over the management of society at about the same time that they are really prepared to turn the opportunity to good account.

Psychological Depression

IN THE good old days when thousands were irreverent enough to laugh at the munition-maker's lyric in the Cohan Review—

> They don't know why they went to war,
> They don't know what they're fighting for,
> But I know—they're fighting for me—

there was another highly prized song about the "psychological depression." The slump of 1914 had arrived and business men were complaining of the Democratic administration. President Wilson had attempted a defense by saying that fundamental conditions were sound, that the trouble lay in the attitude of business, that the depression was merely psychological. And the public was not too awed by Presidents to laugh long and loud.

Last summer business was poor. Congress—the radicals—railroad baiters—opponents of the Mellon plan—anybody and everybody who was not a 100 percent Republican was blamed. By a popular uprising, Coolidge, Dawes and Prosperity were elected. Coolidge and Dawes are still on the job, but there have lately appeared treasonable inquiries about the whereabouts of Prosperity. There comes that vague and untraceable rumor that business is not good. Chambers of Commerce would like the President's publicity agents to mark up the price and number of his spring suits. But a slump under a Republican administration is unorthodox and inadmissible. We are assured by Cabinet Secretaries who have the ear of practical men that talk of depression is all nonsense; fundamental conditions as shown by trade statistics were never better. Bank circulars, and prominent publishers who have advertising for sale, join the chorus. We expect before long to hear again the words "psychological depression." Has the audience forgotten how to laugh?

We have unbounded respect for statistics, but it is by no means certain that even those most familiar with the statistical series bearing on the business cycle know yet how to interpret them with complete accuracy. Those well informed in this matter are wary of cocksure predictions. And those best informed make reservations in translating even the present significance of many of these figures. Only those who have never had to build up statistical series from original data have a superstitious reverence for the surface indications of the resulting averages. But let us examine briefly the present statistical situation to see how it looks.

Manufacturing production, as recorded by the Federal Reserve Board, lost six percent between January and February, and gained twelve percent between February and March, standing in the latter month five percent above last year at the same time. Department store sales, after losing ground the first two months in the year, jumped twenty percent in March, and were five percent greater than in March, 1924. Mail order houses, gaining fourteen percent in March, were above last year by a like amount. They did better again in April. Chains of five- and ten-cent stores have had improving trade and are better off than last year; wholesale trade has been more active than a year ago. So far, so good.

But the total significance of these figures is modified by circumstances. The records of manufacturing production cover only a limited number of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

industries, and are appreciably affected by a gain in cotton textiles which are recovering from a severe depression last year, not shooting up from a "normal" level. Cotton is bought chiefly by those of moderate income or those who, through reduction of income, give up wearing silk. Department stores are steadily enlarging their custom through successful competition with small retailers—in bad times as well as in good. This is even more true of mail-order houses and ten-cent chains. Mail order business is, too, largely a reflection of the farmers' purchasing power, and the temporarily high prices of grains last year gave the farmers a boost which is by no means certain to continue. Ten-cent store prosperity is sometimes not a sign of general prosperity, but rather the reverse, since people look there for bargains when they cannot pay higher prices elsewhere. There is no good index of retail trade in general.

Now for the other side of the picture. Bituminous coal production is known with great accuracy. It is a fairly good index of manufacturing and railroad activity, since soft coal is our chief source of power. For months coal mining has been dull. In March it was eight percent less than in March, 1924. Iron and steel are used in so many other products, directly or indirectly, that they are often called the barometer of trade. Experience shows that their movement often precedes that of other industries. There were eight percent fewer pig iron furnaces in blast on April 30, than on March 30, and the average daily production was five and one-half percent less in April than in March. The average daily production of steel ingots fell fourteen percent in April. Unfilled orders of the United States Steel Corporation, an almost unfailing indication of future steel production, decreased eight percent in March and almost as much in April, reaching the lowest total since November, 1924. Wool receipts, tin receipts, and construction of ships and locomotives have been falling. The Federal Reserve Board's index of production in basic industries has been losing ground ever since January. Wholesale prices, covering a wide array of commodities, and often delicately balanced between supply and demand, have been declining for several weeks. The Department of Commerce index of stocks of goods on hand in various commercial and business houses has increased and was in March nine percent above a year ago. Nearly all the series showing a downward tendency are more comprehensive and more reliable than those cited by the boosters.

"Fundamental conditions" may be sound if one means by that vague statement that we are not suffering from unstable money, are in no danger of a financial crisis, need not fear a Communist revolution, have no larger proportion of unemployment than most other industrial nations, and may benefit some time by the halting recovery of Europe. But there is no mistaking the immediate downward tendency of the basic industrial series. The present situation is similar to those in the past when the curve of the business cycle had passed its peak and turned depression-ward. The stock market goes first, then iron and steel and other primary industries. General manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade usually follow at some distance and with less emphasis.

There is no need to fear calamity; not enough "prosperity" of the kind which boosts prices has preceded the present slump so that severe deflation seems to be in prospect. This is probably only a moderate recession such as we have been having at short intervals ever since the recovery of 1922. But the equipment of most of our factories can produce so much that it does not take them long to fill the shelves to a point where dealers order sparingly until the consumers catch up with production. The fact that the recent ups and downs of business are so comparatively mild and of short duration may partly be accounted for on the ground that buyers have become accustomed to ordering from hand to mouth instead of competing with each other for goods, bidding up prices, and accumulating costly inventories in the vain belief that every little burst of good times will be endless.

It would be wholesome if the public would learn from their experience that just as depression is not psychological—in the sense in which Wilson used the word—neither is prosperity. You cannot get prosperity by voting for it, or by taking your economics undenatured from business men. All the people in the country having all possible confidence in the business future might eventually produce the worst depression in history. A little lack of confidence promptly enough applied may save despair later. Presidents can scarcely be held responsible for the state of business—except in so far as they uphold without modification the existing economic régime. The process of an indiscriminate unregulated scramble for profits, with its waste and its unequal distribution of income, can hardly be dissociated from such irregularities as periodic depression and unemployment.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1925, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 421 WEST 21ST STREET, NEW YORK HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT, ROBERT HALLOWELL, SECRETARY AND PUBLISHER, DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER

EDITORS

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN ROBERT LITTELL
ALVIN JOHNSON C. E. AYRES GEORGE SOULE
ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY R. H. TAWNEY
DAVID FRIDAY H. N. BRAILSFORD LEO WOLMAN

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This Man Borah

IN the warm days of June, when everything in the Cleveland Auditorium was progressing to its logical conclusion except the choice of a Vice-President, it is said that Mr. Coolidge sent for Borah and informed him, "Mr. Borah, I want you on the ticket with me."

And Borah, we are told, replied: "In which place, Mr. President?"

That story may be just a myth. No matter. That it can be told and readily believed by an audience of some proportions, is testimonial to Borah's hold upon the interest of his public. He is a spectacular and engaging figure, this man Borah. He is particularly spectacular and engaging at the present moment. He is indisputably in command of a bloc which has replaced LaFollette's bloc as a balance of power in the Senate. He is a quite possible candidate for President in 1928. He is deliberately listened to, in Europe. He is the one Senator above others who defies "placing." Because he is against socialism and yet persistently for granting recognition to socialistic Russia, because he is against forming a new party and yet thoroughly disgusted with his own, he can be invited on successive evenings to address groups of his countrymen who cordially detest each other. He goes his own way with considerable gusto, as ready to denounce a child labor bill one moment as he is to sink a hatchet in some presidential nominee the next.

Borah is a formidable, solitary figure in American politics, with an inscrutable future and a reverberating past.

Where is he going?

Aldrich, that staunch old gentleman from Rhode Island upon whose conservatism the sun never set, thought he knew where Borah was going, as long ago as 1907.

Aldrich was chairman of the Finance Committee when Borah came to the Senate, and had been chairman for a generation.

This is what Aldrich wrote to a colleague, when Borah first came to Washington and was recommended for a place on the Judiciary Committee of the Senate:

"I have looked him up," wrote Aldrich, approving the assignment, "and I find that he is attorney for seven different corporations."

Aldrich retains the honor of being the first conservative Republican statesman to jump to a wrong conclusion about Borah. The years have brought him company.

He appears, Borah, for the first time in the headlines of the eastern press in three quite different rôles—all in the same year 1907:

1. Defending himself, in the courts of Idaho, against much the same sort of litigation which has recently overtaken his colleague, Wheeler.
2. Prosecuting, on behalf of the government, and with Clarence Darrow as defendant's counsel, the case of the State of Idaho vs. William Haywood (late commissar of a province on the edge of Turkestan) for the murder of Governor Steunenberg.
3. Booming as an available candidate for the Presidency of the United States, while his candidate was still a member of the Cabinet, a conservative statesman with whom he was due to lunch often and break many times, William Howard Taft.

These are all pertinent facts and instructive facts in Borah's record: facts dating back before the famous fight on the League of Nations, and the celebrated resolution for a conference on navies, and the days when, in 1912, Borah almost left the party to go with Roosevelt, and the days when, in 1920, Borah almost left the party to go with Johnson, and the days when, in 1924, Borah almost left the party to go with LaFollette, and the days when, in 1925, Borah was unquestionably going by himself.

Let us consider first, however, the case of Borah and the professional gambler who sat beside the window in the day-coach.

William E. Borah started for the Senate when his father presented him with two lambs, three pigs, and a yearling colt.

He was a Middle Westerner at the outset. He was born on a farm near Fairfield, Wayne County, Illinois, in 1865. His father and mother were Kentuckians. He left the farm when, with his father's gift, he was able to sell the lambs, the pigs, and the yearling colt for enough money to enter an academy at Enfield, Illinois. Thence he proceeded to the University of Kansas, where, with such odd chores as waiting on table to earn his way, he took a law degree. He was admitted to the Kansas bar in 1889, at the age of twenty-four.

For a year and a half he practiced law in Lyons, Kansas. Then Kansas began to be too crowded for one whose need was elbow-room, and he started west.

The Pullman car had been invented, but Borah traveled in a day-coach. Reports generally agree that his seat-mate the first night out was a salesman for a harvesting machinery company whose opinions carried little weight. The salesman for the harvesting machinery company recommended Portland.

Reports also generally agree that the seat-mate for the second night was a more personable figure: a professional gambler whose instinct told him to avoid professional relations with the sharp-eyed, shocky-haired young traveler beside him, and talk boom towns instead.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This second night's companion recommended Boise as a stopping-place: Boise, the capital of a thriving state which had entered the union as recently as the year before.

Borah left the train at Boise. He has described himself, in one of his interviews, as alighting at the station with $16.69. He had also described himself as having been willing, at the time, to push farther west—except for the fact that no $16.69 would have been left had he gone on.

It is possible that if he had gone farther, and set himself up in a state with wider legal opportunities, like Oregon or Washington, Borah would not have been tempted, later, into politics.

Quite possibly, had the $16.69 been $66.69, French statesmen of the present generation would have lived and died without hearing the strange word Idaho; and Koreans, East Indians, Filipinos, Esthonians, Finns, and Abyssinians would have lost in Washington one of their best opportunities to plead the rights of self-determination.

Borah settled in Boise in 1891. He was married in 1895 to Miss Mamie McConnell of that city. He practiced law. He acquired authority to represent several mining firms and lumber companies as counsel—the first of those mining firms and lumber companies which Senator Aldrich was to count with satisfaction on seven fingers, later on.

Meantime, while the affairs of law still left him time, Borah flirted intermittently with politics.

The first flirtation was swift, violent and unproductive.

Borah appears, the year after his marriage, offering himself for the first time as a candidate for public office, in a campaign for a seat in the House of Representatives.

It is a fact unrecorded in his brief biographical essays for Who's Who and the Directory of Congress that in 1896 Borah presented himself to the electorate of Idaho not as a Republican but as a Silver-Republican, carrying, as well as it could be carried, the torch of McKinley in one hand, the torch of Bryan in the other.

It is a further unrecorded fact that Borah finished second in this contest, polling 8,900 votes to 13,500 for his opponent, one James Gunn.

Borah was not beaten because he was too strong a Silver man for Idaho in 1896, but because he was not strong enough. Idaho went Democratic-Populist by a vote of four to one. Borah, losing, led his ticket.

The law practice flourished. Borah achieved and developed a friendship with the Governor of Idaho, Steunenberg, which brought him into the courts for the first time as a prosecutor of the public's cases. When the Coeur d'Alene trials began in 1899, Borah was chosen by the Governor to handle the state's cases. He was indisputably in the public eye by this time, and by the narrow margin of four votes missed in 1903 being sent by the Idaho Legislature (this, of course, was in the days when the state legislature did the choosing) to Washington as a member of the Senate.

It is said that he could have been elected had he been willing to pledge himself to several commitments.

Borah refused to commit himself. It was already an article of faith with him, apparently, to play a lone hand and let the future mind itself. There occurred about this time, in 1905, to be exact, one of those incidents which casts light on Borah's highly personal methods.

The incident concerns Jim Quarles, shortstop on the Boise baseball team.

Quarles was a negro, an excellent fielder, and a fair batsman: one of a handful of his race who had journeyed as far as Idaho in 1905, and one of a very small number who could handle throws to second base.

Quarles journeyed one day from Boise to the neighboring town of Nampa with the Boise baseball team.

There was a hot game in Nampa, followed by a row. Quarles was the centre of the row. A policeman interfered. Quarles shot him. This news was telephoned to Borah by a friend, who added that there had been a good deal of excitement in the town, but that Quarles was in jail and the excitement dying down.

An hour before midnight, however, the friend telephoned again: to say, this time, that the town was surging, and that without some interference Quarles would certainly be lynched within an hour.

Borah dressed. He was not a state official with responsibility for this affair; but he was an interested citizen. While dressing he telephoned his friend, the Governor, and arranged to have an engine and two cars run to Nampa as a special train. It is the interesting part of the story that on the trip to Nampa he thought of going through the cars and pulling the window-curtains down.

Nampa is twenty miles. At Nampa the train ran into the mob before the jail. Borah tried to talk from the top of a drygoods box and found himself howled down. He tried another drygoods box and found himself howled down again. He climbed the steps of the jail, and while the mob was hacking at the stones in which a row of bars was set, had a momentary lull in which to face the crowd.

"You men," he shouted, "want to understand that we are not going to permit you to disgrace the state. We are here to prevent lynch law. We are going to do it peacefully if we can, but by force if we have to. That train is loaded with militia."

Quarles went back to Boise in the smoker.

Times without number Borah has used that empty train.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The margin, in 1903, by which Borah missed election to the Senate was a narrow margin. His chance came four years later. In 1907, when Roosevelt was President of the country and the talk in Washington was talk of trusts, when Charles Evans Hughes was Governor of New York and Woodrow Wilson was President of Princeton and Calvin Coolidge was about to be inaugurated Mayor of the city of Northampton, Borah was elected to the Senate in the place of a Democratic member named Dubois, who had been in and out of Congress several times.

The same year, Borah fought the Haywood case and defended himself against a charge of conspiracy to defraud the government.

Haywood stood indicted, in 1907, with complicity in the murder of ex-Governor Steunenberg in the course of a mine war in Idaho. Clarence Darrow defended Haywood, and insisted that an attempt was being made to frame an unpopular labor leader for a crime of which he had no knowledge. Borah prosecuted the case, insisted that there was no doubt of Haywood's guilt, and denied that the state's attack was an attack on labor.

Feeling ran high. At its height there occurred an incident not common in the record of such cases.

It is not an important incident, but it is interesting. Borah was reading from an attack on Steunenberg in the miners' union papers. He observed that the name of Roosevelt was linked with that of Steunenberg as a "hireling and traitor."

Roosevelt was President. It was a moment made to order for a prosecutor on the make.

Borah walked over to Darrow's table and pointed out the paragraph. "This jury is Republican," he said to Darrow. "I won't read the rest."

Borah lost his case. Haywood was acquitted in July after a long wrangle in the jury. Borah went from Haywood's prosecution to his own defense.

He was accused, Borah, of violating the provisions of a stone and timber law designed to prevent the taking out of land (Idaho was a land grant state) for purposes of speculation. It was Borah's contention that this law was so administered as to make it a public nuisance. "The government," he said, "makes a man swear that he doesn't take land on speculation, and the government's agents construe this to mean that he must not take it with a view to selling it." Borah's friends described him as indicted through the efforts of political opponents. The trial of the case was prompt, and as a prelude to a career in national politics, interesting.

1. Borah refused to take technical advantage of the statute of limitations or of any other statute.
2. He was the only witness in his own behalf.
3. His evidence ran away with him and he read a lecture to the jury.
4. The crowd in the court-room applauded him.
5. The judge warned the crowd to stop applauding him.
6. The jury was out long enough to count ten.
7. It brought in a verdict of Not Guilty.
8. Three churches rang their bells and the fire department made a demonstration running through the principal streets of Boise, terminating at the Hotel Idaho, whither Borah had been escorted by a brass band playing "Hail to the Chief" and several hundred citizens blowing whistles.

That celebration was really Borah's send-off. A few days later he was entrained for Washington to attend his first Senate session.

Of the journey east, in the fall of 1907, one circumstance is worth remarking. 1907 was the year before a national election. Wise men within both parties were choosing candidates. There was one member of the Cabinet, at this time, distinguished for his friendship with the President.

"Secretary Taft is very popular in Idaho and in the west generally," was the word which Borah brought to the reporters who interviewed him on his way to Washington. "Out there we believe that he is a big man in more ways than one. . . . Taft sentiment is unquestionably strong in Idaho. . . ."

Next year, in company with Boies Penrose, T. Coleman duPont and other young cadets in the Republican party, Borah served on the Taft Campaign Committee as one of Frank H. Hitchcock's first lieutenants.

Taft, of course, was elected; and it was under the Presidency of Taft that Borah spent four of his first six years in Washington.

Different facts will strike different observers. One fact is pertinent even in the briefest sketch of Borah's record:

Here, a man young in the Senate at forty-four, serving his first term under a conservative administration whose spokesmen on the floors of Congress were such aggressively conservative figures as Gallinger, Penrose, Platt, Tawney, Cannon—Borah had already achieved, by 1909, the faculty of breaking bread with a President at one o'clock and attacking the President's favorite legislation a little after three.

Social note from Washington, August 3, 1909:

"Mr. Borah lunched today at the White House with President Taft."

Congressional note from Washington, same day, same year:

"Among those rebel Republican Senators opposing President Taft's tariff bill are Senators Nelson, Burkett, Borah—"

Lunches at one end of Pennsylvania Avenue and skirmishes at the other end went forward intermittently throughout four years.

The spectacle of Borah (square, brown and active) following the leadership of Taft (round, white and sedate) is the spectacle of an insurgent quarrelling at every turn with a conservative, and managing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

despite that fact to remain on terms of personal friendship.

Borah was an eager partisan, in the years from 1908 to 1912, of many things which Taft was cool about.

He was interested in union labor. He introduced a resolution to investigate the hours of labor in the steel plants, did the investigating for himself, and found that a twelve-hour day was "cruel, if not brutal."

He was interested in the control of industry. The line of cleavage which he held in politics in 1910 was the line "between those who think industrial questions will be worked out in themselves and those who believe there must be control of large industries and governmental legislation."

He was interested in scuttling a reactionary tariff. "Before this debate is done," he told the Senate in 1911, "I shall bring into this chamber for revision every section of the Payne-Aldrich bill."

He was interested in Lorimer. It was his amendment, in June 1910, which sought to introduce after the word "investigate" the word "immediately."

He was interested in sugar. In 1909 and 1910 he laid the foundations of that knowledge of the sugar trust which later served him in his attack on Mr. Warren.

None of these things interested Taft. At least, if they interested him it was only because they bothered him.

Yet Borah remained on terms of intimacy with Taft, apparently as well liked as any visitor in the White House.

He was not infrequently described as "a particular adherent of President Taft's" (see, for example, New York World of March 14, 1909).

He was talked of as Vice-Presidential candidate to run with Taft in 1912.

He was reported by the Associated Press (December 3, 1911) to possess in so large measure the confidence of Taft that Taft was considering him for an appointment to the Supreme Court as successor to the late Justice Harlan.

There is a phrase from Merton of the Movies which does not fit badly. As long ago as 1909 it began to be Borah's very special faculty to provide Republican Presidents with a best friend and severest critic.

It comes to this, perhaps: Borah possesses the ability (comparatively rare in American politics) so to narrow political controversy as to fight on points of special interest without seeking a reward in exile.

That is a quality (useful or otherwise) which is inexplicable to many of his colleagues and makes him a somewhat lonely figure in the Senate. The Senate is gregariously minded.

Could it have been foretold, as long ago as 1908, that when the great schism came in 1912 Borah would not leave the party?

Borah alternately lunched with Taft and fought his bills from 1908 to 1912. He was still on terms of friendship in the White House when he announced, in March of 1912, that with Roosevelt's social views he had more in common than he had with Taft's, and that he would support Roosevelt at the convention. He could still lunch with the President when he wired his state organization (March 27, 1912): "Personal friends supporting Taft have told me that my stand against the President will endanger my personal interests. Perhaps this is true but it does not change the situation."

Three months later, in one of Chicago's hottest Junes, Borah came to the famous steam-roller convention as a partisan of Roosevelt.

The battle ended swiftly. It will be remembered that Taft was renominated on the first ballot, after the real fight had come on the seating of delegates.

Roosevelt bolted. Johnson bolted. The first Progressive convention was set for early August.

And Borah?

Borah denied that he would leave the party. He also denied that he would give his active support to Taft.

"I doubt," he said, "if the speeches I propose to make would be acceptable to the National Committee."

On July 2, a few days after the battle at Chicago, Borah called at the White House for a chat with Taft.

Borah did not leave the party. Neither did he abandon his dissatisfaction with the party's methods. "I said before the Chicago convention as well as after it," he explained, in August, "that I was not going with any third party movement. But I say with equal positiveness that I am going to advocate progressive policies, as I have been advocating them for years. I shall not permit myself to feel any restraint in continuing the fight because I am not leaving the party.

"I expect, however, to pass my time in Idaho until election."

Borah passed his time in Idaho. He was still in Idaho when Roosevelt toured that state for votes six weeks before election. Roosevelt invited him to lunch aboard his train. Borah and Roosevelt discussed chances.

How he voted in 1912, and whether the practice of advocating progressive principles within a conservative party demands a vote for the principles or a vote for the party, nobody knows. One fact may be interesting.

Nine years after all of this was over, nine years after Roosevelt had made his last campaign, and nine years after the Progressive party's days were ended, the name of William Howard Taft came

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quietly before the Senate as a Presidential nomination for the Supreme Court of the United States.

Taft was confirmed in the Senate by 60 to 4.

One vote of the four against was Watson's (the Georgia Watson's) who voted against everything. One vote was Hiram Johnson's. One vote was La Follette's. One vote was Borah's.

The party of Taft from within whose ranks Borah was advocating progressive principles in 1912 is today the party of Coolidge. The party has not changed. But then, neither has Borah.

"I have remained in my party," he said a year or two ago, "for the reason that I have been just as free in it as I would have been in any other."

And that claim, as claims go in politics, is tolerably well sustained by a long record.

CHARLES MERZ.

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of three articles.)

What Next in Germany?

HAVING just returned from Europe after some weeks of study of the German situation just prior to the Presidential election, there are certain phases of the problem which seem to me either ignored or misunderstood in America as in most of the Allied countries. Laying aside those inevitable prejudices growing out of the War, the suspicions which are based upon the past, dismissing the wholly unfounded belief that the mass of the German people remains what we at least believed it to have been in 1914 and the following war years, and the similarly erroneous conception that for all Germans the Republic is no more than a sham, a cover for new war preparations, there is still a phase of the situation—I think the most important phase—which escapes American appreciation.

The real difficulty in Germany and the true danger to the Republic does not lie in the unanimity of Germans, but rather in their fatal and traditional differences. If the struggle between the Republic and the Monarchy were the single conflict, the chances are that the Monarchy would be permanently lost, as every election result, including the last, has demonstrated that the sum of the anti-Monarchical votes is in excess of the Monarchical.

What makes the situation complicated and dangerous is the fact that the conflict between Republic and Monarchy is mixed up with the struggle between Capital and Labor, and that the Republican parties are hopelessly divided themselves on this second issue. Thus if the Socialist party, which is the largest single element in the Weimar Bloc, is patently the party of Labor pure and simple, the other two elements, the Democrats and the Catholic Centre, are divided within their own ranks on the question, since both contain capitalists as well as workingmen. Thus agreeing with the Socialists on the issue of the Republic, both of these parties are separated from the Socialists very widely on economic issues. The very alliance of the two Bourgeois parties with the Socialists is itself unnatural. And I ignore the religious differences, which play an important part, as the recent election showed.

By contrast, the two parties which make up the Right and are Monarchical, namely the Nationalists and the People's Party, are both Capitalistic in sympathies, the Nationalists representing the great landowners and the old nobility, while the People's Party is almost exclusively the party of Big Business and of the great industrialists. The Socialists, who are the enemies of the Nationalists for political reasons, are quite as much the foes of the People's Party for economic reasons.

The present Luther-Stresemann Cabinet in Germany represents the very skillful attempt of the People's Party, under the guidance of Stresemann, to control the Right group, that is, to make the real issue for the immediate future economic, and draw to itself support from the Bourgeois Republican Parties, retaining the assistance of the Nationalists.

But the fundamental basis of any such alliance must be the pursuance of domestic and foreign policies which will enable Big Business to prosper, to regain foreign markets, to put Germany economically back where she was in 1914. And to accomplish this the first prerequisite is the maintenance and expansion of foreign confidence in Germany. And the obvious corollary is that for the time being the Republic must be maintained.

Thus the Luther-Stresemann Cabinet undertook to impose a truce in the matter of Republic versus Monarchy. It set forth quite rationally that any restoration at the present hour, while the Rhineland is occupied by Allied troops, would be mere folly, that it would lead only to prolonged occupation and to the ruin of German commercial prospects abroad, just as it might well lead to domestic disorder. In a word, it said to the Nationalists, "You can't have a restoration now without ruining everything, therefore put that issue aside and work with us to restore German prosperity and prestige, to get foreign loans and to procure the evacuation of German soil. Later your time will surely come."

This policy, quite obviously intelligent, was expressed in the adoption of the Dawes Report under the pressure of the Industrialists, who did procure the necessary Nationalist votes. It was also expressed in the proposals made by Stresemann to France and to England for mutual guarantee pacts. Stresemann recognized quite clearly that no evacuation and no real adjustment was possible until France felt secure, and what he offered in reality

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a German promise to resign all eventual ambitions with respect of Alsace-Lorraine.

This policy of political détente with France had a very favorable reception in London, and despite outward signs I can testify of my own knowledge that it had also made a very profound impression in Paris. France, still measurably dominated by her fear of ultimate German attack, and suspicious because Stresemann was unable—and unwilling, as a German—to give similar assurances as to Poland, was none the less in a mood to discuss the German proffer. Moreover, this French readiness was increased greatly when, at the first turn of the presidential election, the Republican candidates received more votes than the Nationalist. This was accepted as proof of the vitality of the Republican sentiment, and even the Paris Temps commented favorably on the result and its significance.

But precisely at this moment the Nationalists suddenly rejected the Luther-Stresemann program and policy, dropped their doomed candidate, and named Hindenburg, believing that the personal popularity of the old Marshal would enable them to win the election, as proved to be the case. But in doing this they upset all the work of Luther and Stresemann, destroyed what had been gained abroad, alarmed France, disconcerted Britain, and precipitated the issue between Republic and Monarchy.

Now this is the point to which we have come. Luther and Stresemann, the People's Party, looked with disappointment and even with disgust upon the Nationalist manœuvre. But they had to choose between going over to their enemies, the Socialists, or staying with their natural allies, the Nationalists. Doubtless Stresemann hoped that Hindenburg would be beaten, and his support was lukewarm. But he had to follow his party, which made its decision on economic issues and supported Hindenburg, making his victory possible.

But after election the old question is raised: What are the Nationalists going to do now? Will they submit to the procrastinating policy of Luther and Stresemann, permitting foreign negotiations to go forward, allowing the Republic to stand unchallenged, confining their activities to undermining it secretly? Or will they follow the Hindenburg coup by another overt act which shall further disturb opinion abroad and inflame domestic political passions?

Again, assuming that Stresemann is able to resume his foreign operations with Nationalist approval, to reopen the discussion of security pacts with France—and France remains apprehensive, alarmed, declines to agree to the evacuation of the Cologne Zone, insists upon new German concessions because of German violations of the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles—how long will the extreme Nationalists sit quiet under such a situation, and how long before they will do something giving France further cause for apprehension?

Moreover, for the Nationalists there is the constant danger that what happened in France after 1870 may occur in Germany after 1918, namely that the Republic may endure. Waiting ten years until the armies of occupation have gone and German economic restoration is complete, risks permitting the Republic to establish itself. So far it is only associated with domestic misery and foreign humiliation, but in ten years, if prosperity and prestige are regained under the Republic, may it not last?

I assume that a majority of the People's Party are Monarchists, at least in principle, but they are business men in fact, and if they stand with the Nationalists as conservatives in matters of business, yet they run obvious dangers if the Nationalists control the situation and undertake extreme policies, which may compromise business recovery. Yet the Nationalists, who are Monarchists before all else, run patent perils if they let the business men restore prosperity under the Republic.

Now, as I see it, the present issue in Germany is not between Republic and Monarchy; it is between business and royalist. If business regains the upper hand, then we shall have the struggle over the form of government adjourned for an indefinite period, for a decade perhaps. But if the Monarchists retain control, undertake to exploit the Hindenburg victory, then we are likely to have relatively immediate disastrous complications abroad and disturbances at home in Germany.

The Luther-Stresemann calculation was of a Bourgeois Bloc, made up of representatives of the Democratic, Centre and People's Party, in association with the Nationalists and in obvious conflict with the Socialists and Communists, but with the struggle kept on economic lines and the issue of the form of government adjourned. This was the only present basis of alliance between the Centre and Democratic parties, which are Republican, and the Nationalist which is Monarchical. In this combination the People's Party was to hold the balance.

But in nominating Hindenburg and electing him, the Nationalists upset the whole combination. They threw the Centre and Democrats back into association with the Socialists, and they ditched the chances of success of Stresemann's foreign negotiations, particularly with France. Now their next and unmistakable step would be to exploit the failure of further Stresemann negotiations abroad and the prolongation of French and British occupation of the Cologne Zone, to arouse German patriotic passion.

This is, perhaps, good strategy from the Nationalists' point of view, but it is suicidal from the point of view of Big Business. To forestall such manœuvres, Stresemann and Luther must now rely upon success in their foreign negotiations, upon obtaining a speedy evacuation of the Cologne Zone; if they fail in this, then they would seem to have played their last card, and the temporary supremacy of the People's Party will be at an end. But until their failure is complete, the issue between Republic and restoration is in abeyance.

FRANK H. SIMONDS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Dancing Bear

THE lesson might have been learned after the Hard Cider Campaign of 1840, when a political party without an issue and with only a mediocre candidate got itself elected by wheeling log cabins and rolling cider barrels through the streets of an America eager for any sort of a substitute for reality. By 1876 it was fairly well established that the temperance principles of one candidate availed more than the intellectual preeminence of his opponent, and in 1896 the "free silver" buncombe of Bryan was brought to naught only by the even more preposterous buncombe of the McKinley campaign with its hysterical predictions of disaster. The insincerities of 1920 and 1924 are of too recent and painful memory to require amplification; but they, too, point to the truth of our major premise, which is, if I have not stated it, that you can—with enough money and a good press agent—fool enough of the people all of the time.

Despite these manifold and convincing examples of the ease with which the masses are persuaded to accept the worse for the better reason, conservatives have, until very recently, distrusted democracy. The initiative, referendum and recall struck terror to the conservative soul, so that even Roosevelt's glittering generalities on these matters seemed evidence of the reddest radicalism, with God-knew-what malign intent against the Constitution of the United States. It was assumed in those dimly distant days that, once all sorts of people were allowed to vote on all sorts of questions with ballots a foot and a half long, the end had come for honest capital and individual enterprise; that Red Revolution would stalk through the streets unchallenged; and that Business, Religion, True Principles and the Home would be forced to sit annually in anxious dread while the people passed their Fool Legislation. On this basis, those assumed to represent the Interests fought every extension of popular government, direct election of United States senators, suffrage for women, the direct primary. Millions of words and doubtless millions of dollars were spent in the opening years of this century to hinder the advance of these "revolutionary ideas." It can hardly be a secret now that the people who put up the money and made the speeches are wondering why they went to so much trouble.

At any rate, it is no secret in Great Britain, where the Conservative Party is on the verge of embracing the referendum as a leading feature of its reform program, and as a means of forestalling revolution! Indeed, Mr. Stanley Baldwin would almost surely have adopted the referendum—which Mr. Taft and Mr. Root used to view with such grave concern—had he not feared a concentration of Liberal and Labor opposition! On this point the Conservative London Spectator is very earnest indeed:

"In our opinion," says that dignified weekly, "the government ought to give a definite pledge that there shall be no further appeal to the country until this necessary constitutional change (the referendum) has been made. We are a democracy, but what could be more undemocratic than that the final Court of Appeal should not be the people themselves? There is dangerous talk about restoring powers to the House of Lords—powers which would be unnecessary if the Poll of the People became a part of our Constitution."

Perhaps the plain facts about the harmlessness of the Proletariat have never been more plainly stated, but The Spectator ceases to be frank in its elaboration of the principle:

"The only simple and effective plan . . . is to refer legislation directly to the people themselves. 'Do you, or do you not, want this bill which has passed through all stages of Parliament to become law?' That is the question which the referendum puts. It is nonsense to say that a man or woman who is intelligent enough to choose a member of parliament is not intelligent enough to answer that simple question."

What the editor of The Spectator means, whether he knows it or not, is that a voter is intelligent enough to answer that simple question when he has the Daily Mail and the Times and the Daily Telegraph and the weeklies to tell him how to answer it. Against the hue and cry which these champions of right thinking would raise in behalf of the "right side" of every referendum, what chance would, say, Mr. MacDonald's late cabinet have to pass a single measure? The Campbell trial and the alleged Zinoviev note taught the British Conservatives and the "interests" not to fear the British elector. He is a good old dog. Sound the call of the pack and he can be trusted. No wonder that, as The Spectator puts it, "Socialists hate the referendum like the plague because they know it probably means an end to all revolutionary schemes. The vast majority, as has been proved over and over again, are not revolutionary. But the very fact that revolutionaries loathe and fear the referendum is the very reason why a Unionist government should make a point of adding it to the Constitution. One of the cardinal rules of business safety is to insure yourself against a great risk when you have the power to do it. Revolution is the kind of incendiarism against which the country ought to take out a good, safe and comprehensive policy. That policy is to be found in the Poll of the People."

If, after having actually experienced one Labor government, the English Conservatives have learned that elementary political truth, why have we not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

learned it here? All the stuffing about "revolution" and "incendiarism" aside, the lesson so ably set forth in The Spectator is simply that the People would rather purr than scratch—and that you can hire competent "publicity men" to say "Nice kitty, kitty" to the People for about $125 a week. In America we have a hundred demonstrations of this immutable truth for every one which England can produce. Humiliating memories of the sovereign American People gathering themselves under the wing of the late Mr. Harding to escape the wrath of a bogus and assiduously concocted "super-state," and of the same sovereign American People four years later fleeing to the Republican Party, oil and all, lest Mr. La Follette destroy the Constitution, are fresh in the minds of all. We need not discuss them, save to emphasize the complete lack of foundation in fact for the supposition that the People are dangerous. As a prominent Republican consulting engineer of the campaign said, "Feed 'em this Constitution stuff, and they'll forget all about Oil!" They did. And in my own state of Connecticut a man of relatively slight ability and one without favor except in a small political machine has been elected to the United States Senate because his campaign managers were successful in convincing my fellow citizens that his opponent, Mr. Hamilton Holt, was a "pacifist" because he made speeches in behalf of Mr. Taft's League to Enforce Peace! So much for the intelligence of the Average Voter.

What are we to do about it? Nothing? The "civilized minority" cannot hope to compete effectually with the publicity man backed by millions, the chattering Press, the tepid radio, the insolent politician busy with "giving the people what they want." Like the Gospel, "sweetness and light" are free to all, but choice is also free, and since it is being made so devilishly easy to choose the cheap, the insincere, the meretricious, the ugly, the ex parte and the selfish way, men of taste may have to derive such pleasures as they can from the spectacle of their fellows cavorting to the tune of their exploiters and crying down those who would bring them salvation. The folly of mankind is no new thing, and new manifestations of it need not upset the cosmos of the disciplined thinker. There is irony in the fact that the age of inventions which was to accomplish man's awakening is being used so widely the more efficiently to waft him to sleep. It is tragic that man should use his new and greater liberty more irrevocably to bind his own chains, and that he should regard his enslavement as the dawn of a new paradise attests the potency of the modern industrial Circe's magic wand. Nevertheless, tragedy is not altogether without entertainment, and the spectacle of Prometheus has doubtless given pleasure to many who wrest a philosophy from a relentless universe. From Socrates to Matthew Arnold and beyond, the problem of civilized man has been the same. Man's battle with his destiny is a one-sided affair and always has been. That he is now physically more comfortable than he has ever been before and that he can vote oftener are no small gains over the past, for they increase the physical stamina and self-respect of the race. These things are not to be despised. If man chooses to be a Christian slave, it is well that he should be a contented and comely one. If he can achieve contentment and comeliness by surrendering a critical capacity which he never had in exchange for greater economic security, and can count himself the most favored of all ages because he can "get Schenectady," it may be something has been gained.

And yet, and yet . . . there are doubts. Are we so sure that we can leave the uncritical man, the majority of men, to be sated by etiquette books and radio hog-wash, and retain for ourselves the right to civilization, independence, liberalism and the free breath of intellect? Are we so sure that we have guaranteed for ourselves the right to issue Jeremiads? Can we be certain that Demos, urged by every powerful agency to believe that Comfort is God and that Uniformity is his Prophet, will not take that Gospel to imply that those who say with Cyrano, "I stand—not high it may be—but alone" shall be put to the sword? Can we leave man, unreminded and unreproached, in his content to be a mob, and still be certain that we have preserved for ourselves the right to be individuals? Already sinister and powerful "interests" who fear and hate individuals, have boldly announced their confidence in the loyalty of the mob, should the order for a Holy War be given. Dark days are ahead, and extinction or the cloister may yet be the alternative of those who refuse the challenge.

Today our social order is criticized—extensively, rancorously and bitterly—but too many of the critics are content to laugh at the "hinds," the "yokels" and the Babbitts, as if such cattle need be the concern of no civilized man. This is not so. We need a "passion for souls" to call us to the battle for the preservation and spread of "culture," tolerance, decency and the critical spirit. The bravest Wesleyan zeal is the one thing which can save—not so much George F. Babbitt from the sloughs of Philistia—but you and me and even H. L. Mencken, from jail or hanging. We must burn with a tremendous passion for the evangelization of Demos or we shall lose our precious freedom to enjoy our own Evangel. Laodicean tepidity means the end. for the mob, skilfully guided by mob masters and press agents of "interested" Fallen Angels, can annihilate us if its savagery be not tamed. Before we retire to quiet esoteric libraries, there to amuse ourselves with our own wit and to delight in the clumsy cavortings of the great beast, it may be safer to draw his claws. Otherwise we shall remain perpetually at the mercy of whatever clever exploiter chooses to set him upon us in all his ferocity.

FREDERIC NELSON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Amy Lowell

IN ONE of the essays on Tendencies in American Poetry Amy Lowell remarks: "It should be noticed that all the poets whom we have studied come of sturdy forebears, and this is particularly the case of those of the second and third stages of the movement. The energy which led their ancestors to war with physical conditions has enabled them to war with mental." Of none of the group is this assertion truer than of Amy Lowell herself. She came of pioneer Puritan stock, of a family which has marked through successive bearers of the name the periods of development and culture through which the country has passed. The energy which in her ancestors and relatives went into war, religion, industry, politics and education was in her transmuted into artistic enterprise.

Out of their strength came forth beauty, not the fragile beauty of decay but beauty armed with strength for discovery and conquest. And she knew the secret of this strength in fixity of purpose and of position. In the same essay she notes: "Americans lose much in depth of character and mellowness of mind, by their nomadic habit of life. A person whose childhood has been a series of rapid arrivals and departures from hired lodgings never gains the peculiar tenderness that comes from roots long nourished in one soil." Amy Lowell was of Massachusetts stock which had overcome the temptations of the pioneer. She was born in Brookline, within sight of Boston, and she lived in the midst of her family tradition, in the community to which her family had given so much. She herself escaped the more immediate temptation to remain fixed in that tradition of colonial distinction. In her the pioneering blood of her forebears surged again, though she was a pioneer in things of the mind. She stands as a flaming exception to the decadence of New England. "This is the real decadence," she said, "to see through the eyes of dead men."

Amy Lowell's genius was militant. She enjoyed leadership. Her first volume of verse, A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass, it is true, contains few prophecies of innovation. It was a year or two later that she went to London, and associated herself with the group composed of Richard Aldington, H. D., John Gould Fletcher, D. H. Lawrence and F. S. Flint—a reminder of the Preraphaelite Brotherhood. By practice and precept she made Imagism a distinctive force in the general rebirth of poetry. She took upon herself the rôle of challenger, and with what joyous defiance she flung her gauntlet! At the same time she was the organizing spirit. Her criticism defined the aims of the school and her anthologies brought it recognition. By her studies of foreign influences in Six French Poets, and by her tracing of native developments in Tendencies in Modern American Poetry she gave the movement a place in the history of literature. She liked to think of Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost, of Edgar Lee Masters and Carl Sandburg as its forerunners. Once in speaking of William Vaughn Moody, whose death in 1910 has left his fame somewhat overshadowed by the newer poetry, she said musingly: "I wonder if he could have kept us back." But she was always the soul of generosity and tolerance. She cared far more for poetry than for any theory or school. Her devotion to Imagism and free verse was an expression of her belief in freedom, her desire to enlarge the bounds of poetry. All poets were her friends. She saw them through her critical intelligence and laughed at them and at herself in her Critical Fable; but she was instant and cordial in recognizing their gifts and loyal in upholding them. If she wrote a chapter in the history of poetry she lived a greater one in the hearts of poets.

Amy Lowell's poetry is alive because she lived in it. It was her adventure and her passion, her reality infused with romance. In reading the creed of the Imagists as she wrote it, it is clear how it expresses point by point her own nature—her absorption in reality, her artistic conscience, her love of freedom. "To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word. To create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject. To present an image. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite." Better rules for writing in general cannot be made.

This self-expression is true of everything that she did. Her biography of Keats, that monumental work to which she gave what proved to be her last years in terrific toil for the memory of a great poet, is full of the same verve, the same eager zest, as her poetry. It is living biography because she lived the life of Keats after him. She began as a collector; in her hands old manuscripts became alive as the memorials of living men and a real experience; and then no pains were too great, no scrutiny was too minute, in tracing details and appraising them for the completion of the record. "It is a sort of pointilliste book," she wrote; "I built up my effect by little touches." Each was the result of living energy and loving thought through which it became vital. She came to have a sort of instinctive feeling for Keats's experience as man and poet which led her into the higher ways of criticism. And she wrote of him directly out of herself. Anyone who knew her will hear the very tones of her voice in the energetic staccato of her sentences—perhaps particularly in that passage, now pathetically apt, in which she describes the difficulties of poetic composition. This is the first thing to say of Amy Lowell: she lived and gave life. To her come home her own words to Lady Hamilton in Can Grande's Castle: "What if lily-tongued dandies dip their pens in gall to jeer at you, your blood is alive."

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Notes

EXCEPT that it shows a curious lack of candor and a species of vanity with which few have credited him, a little device of Mr. Coolidge to impress certain callers is unimportant. It is interesting chiefly because of its revelation of Presidential methods and the fact that it has been accepted at face value by all save a few of the more alert among the specially invited White House guests.

In the last few months it has been not an infrequent thing for men of more or less prominence, specially invited by Mr. Coolidge, who come to Washington to talk with him, to leave after their conference greatly impressed with his grasp on the details of their own particular subject.

"Why," said one of them to me the other day, "he sprung certain figures on me that literally took my breath. I had no idea he had gone into the details of the thing so deeply or knew that much about it. We must be mistaken about the man." That sort of thing has happened with a dozen and more persons who have conferred with the President on a dozen and more different subjects.

A few of the Presidential callers—those with the more penetrating minds—have been able to see that the facts and figures concerning their particular subject, so glibly recited by Mr. Coolidge, had been recently learned by rote and were backed by neither genuine knowledge nor real interest. To these it was perfectly plain that the President, prior to their visit, had had someone on the White House staff—either the able, affable and efficient Mr. Welliver, or the equally able, affable and efficient Mr. Clark—carefully look up his subject and supply him with a set of pertinent facts and statistics in conveniently assimilable shape.

That is, of course, not only an entirely proper procedure upon the part of the President, but it is the natural, sensible and logical thing for him to do. I cannot see how he could be criticised for so doing. It is, however, not quite so natural to commit these statistics to memory and casually drop them out in the course of conversation as if coming from his own profound knowledge of the subject.

This is not written in the least as a criticism of the President. If he wants to impress his callers in that way, who am I to object? It is, however, amusing to those who know the procedure by which he is coached for his callers, to hear the uninitiated express their astonishment over the remarkable extent of the President's information.

One of the recent visitors at the White House was former Governor Frank O. Lowden, of Illinois. It is surprising to me that these writing gentlemen who so blithely speculate on the 1928 Republican Presidential possibilities do not seem to realize that should anything occur to make Mr. Coolidge's renomination inexpedient Governor Lowden would be a far more formidable contender for the nomination than Dawes, Borah or Hoover—the three men most frequently mentioned when the 1928 subject is treated.

To those who look beneath the surface, it is plain that Lowden has been campaigning ever since 1920, when he lost the nomination he should have had. A man like Lowden does not give up an ambition for the Presidency lightly. He still has plenty of time—and he knew exactly what he was about when he refused to let that Cleveland Convention nominate him for Vice-President last summer. I fully expect to see him make another fight for the nomination in 1928, unless Coolidge again has it nailed down. If not 1928, 1932. He would not be too old, even for a seven-year wait.

If anyone doubts all this, let him talk with some of the Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska farm leaders, who drift in here from time to time, about what he is doing for the farmer. His is the one name to which they respond enthusiastically. He has given more time and attention to, and spent more money and labor over, agricultural problems than any other public man in the country. He is a man to watch, is Frank Lowden.

In the next session of Congress, the probabilities are that we shall hear almost as much about oil as we did in the last. Whether it results in anything or not, there seems every justification for it.

I am told that Senator Walsh, of Montana, is loading up again this summer on the whole subject, particularly with reference to the developments that have occurred and the facts that have come to light since his investigation ended last year. There is a prospect, I hear, that the same Senate coalition which rejected Mr. Warren by a majority of seven, may back Senator Walsh in another fight for a more thorough investigation. It is just the sort of issue upon which those who formed that anti-Warren coalition can again coalesce.

Of course, if, in the next six months, the government can secure the re-indictment of Fall and Doheney, if it pushes its case with such determination, skill and spirit as to make the looters disgorge, if it punishes the men who corrupted a Cabinet official as well as the Cabinet official—if it can do that, then the necessity for another oil fight in the Senate will have disappeared.

If, however, the future is to be judged by the past, there seems extremely slight chance of these things being accomplished in that length of time, or any other length of time. The general expectation is that no one will go to jail, the looters will keep the loot, and the government will be lucky to get back any part of its property.

Whether the public can be aroused on this subject now is, in my opinion, extremely doubtful. It is too old a story. They remained cold when the thing was fresh and new. Why should one expect that public indignation can be stirred now, no matter what are the facts? It is shocking to contemplate the possible escape of all punishment of the men who participated in what will unquestionably appear in the school histories as one of the great frauds of our time, and it is hateful to think of those who conspired to bribe a member of the President's Cabinet retaining their positions as respectable members of society, but what can be done about it? With a bored public so intent upon making money that it will not raise its eyes off the ground; with a partisan press that insists upon regarding every piece of evidence showing corruption as an effort to "embarrass the President"; with a President who is unexcited in the face of corruption, and with our great figures in finance and business primarily interested not in making outcasts of the crooks, but in seeing that nothing of a "revolutionary nature," calculated to "disturb business," takes place—with conditions and things such as these, what are you going to do about it?

T. R. B.

Washington, D. C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Movie Director

THERE are, at present, two distinct ways of taking (not of making) moving pictures, the difference between them imposed by the economic contrast between America and Germany. The German way is to record as little as possible on the negative, to economize on "footage," and to concentrate waste, if there must be waste, on the time and energy of director and players. The American way is to record *everything* on the negative, to record it four or five times, and to take for a picture which will actually show 6000 feet of film, from sixty to a hundred thousand feet of negative. According to rumor, Eric von Stroheim's name leads all the rest, for his Greed came to New York, cut to the limit of the director's endurance, in 48,000 feet, at which point, as later at 24,000, von Stroheim declared that there wasn't a superfluous scene and nothing more could be omitted. By the law of averages he must have taken about three-quarters of a million feet of film for the ten thousand odd which were shown.

Before her return to the gold standard, Germany could afford human material (paid in paper) and could not afford negative. The director, therefore, would keep his company ten extra days, rather than take a scene more than once. This imposed on him a double burden: He had to know at the moment of taking each scene exactly where that scene would occur in the finished picture and in what relation to every other scene; and at the same time he had to take that scene *once,* and no more. (Ideally, once; actually some re-takes were always necessary.) The American director can, if he has any idea of pace and rhythm, which most have not, take the same scene slowly and rapidly, and working with the invaluable cutter, can choose the one which seems most suitable. He actually does take the same scene over and over, making corrections as he goes, and in the end can paste bits of each "take" together for his completed scene.

Each of the two methods has advantages, and each corresponds to one conception of the art of the movie. I should like to say at once that I am not in the business of defending the German product and that the assumption that all foreign films are made "for art" is to my personal knowledge bunk. Ufa is a commercial firm and undoubtedly made The Last Laugh for money as The Golem and the Siegfried films were made for money. The Germans have the advantage simply of a population *not corrupted,* in regard to the movies, by ten years of films full of American ingenuity and totally lacking in imagination. The German method of taking pictures is adapted to the kind of film the German public cares to see, the kind in which Germany occasionally produces a masterpiece: it is the film which is conceived as as whole, with a specific theme, a unity of intention to which ministers variety of detail (and the Germans can learn from us a great deal about variety of incident and rapidity of action). It is also, this occasional masterpiece, the film which has a kind of structural rhythm of the whole, made up of parallel, similar or contrasting, internal rhythms. Quite apart from the technical virtuosity of The Last Laugh, the comprehended unity of the picture, built up of the diverse rhythms of action, was its outstanding merit. It showed itself in the pace of individuals and in the pace of the whole picture; and the one thing you could be sure of was that the director *knew,* at every moment, what the completed film was going to look like. (I have, of course, no certainty that Murnau did not waste film; the internal evidence is, however, all on the side of economy.)

The advantage of the American method is its extraordinary fluidity, its defiance of the irreparable. The German director rehearses his players until he attains the desired effect; he must have that desired effect in his mind's eye and must be able to keep his players to the sticking point when the camera does begin to record. The American director goes through the scene before the camera; he can take advantage of happy accidents and can try every variation. Nor is that all. He can take scenes without any exceptional meditation over their meaning, because, with all his extra footage, he can build his story over again; a few of those singularly illogical subtitles we see can change any psychology and explain any situation. The American director, moreover, has to build up four or five major situations in each feature film—one to every thousand feet. The last is the climax, and the others occur, carefully timed, to pacify and hold the attention of the patron who arrives in the middle of reel two and requires a punch instantly. The American director's work, therefore, is largely a work of fragments, not of structural development, and for fragments his method of taking is the best.

The work of preparing a story for the movies is generally divided between the adapter (or scenarist) and the continuity writer. The former takes the given story, play, or novel, and, making whatever changes seem advisable, produces an extremely detailed story in which every scene and every situation is described and placed. The continuity writer is the technical expert who arranges this material schematically so that the director may "shoot from the script." The director who shoots "away from" the script (who has hunches while the work is going on and changes the text by recording fresh scenes) is a great nuisance, as his interpolated scenes must eventually be incorporated into the main body of the film. It is obvious that a good director can be one of two things: an intelligent follower of whatever script fate sends him, or a genius who will dictate the script himself, to the extent at least of giving it the impress of his style. In the first case the talent is really mechanical and may be redeemed by ingenuity. If he reads: "she shows signs of agitation" and turns that into a woman tearing a handkerchief, he will earn his pay; if a more subtle representation of that state of mind occurs to him, one fresher and perhaps even more pictorial, he may not. In neither case is he a director in the stage sense of the word, the artist who conceives the whole and creates the necessary and appropriate parts. This is the work of the second type—the director whose first labor is over the script (in Chaplin's case it is, I believe, over the original story, and that is probably the ultimate goal) and who so clearly sees his finished product that he can follow his prepared outline without loss of energy and can concentrate on the best method of making visual the events and emotions which he has already composed and set into proper relations.

There may be no specific relation between the economic restraint under which German directors have labored and the more satisfying films they have often produced. The German directors who have come to America and found thousands to spend where they spent tens, have not been so notably successful, although Lubitsch has made one film which in the industry itself is accounted a masterpiece. What seems certain is that sheer financial limitation has forced the German director to a closer study of what his medium can and cannot accomplish. It has not been in the power of a German director to wreck a few locomotives in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

order to cover up a weak spot in his scenario, nor could he spend, to conquer America, some fifty thousand dollars in publicity artfully intended to withhold from the public the truth that he had made a stupid picture. He has been forced to rely on the instrument.

It is to this discipline, rather than to the mere technique of German film-making, that I would like to see American directors submit themselves. Broadly conceived this would mean a re-valuation of themselves and of the material with which they work. They would have to begin thinking much earlier in the day and continue later into the night, for they would have to become scenarists, directors, and cutters, all together. They would have to think of what they want to get on the screen before thinking of the technical means for getting it there. At present the American method concentrates on the way to show something suggested by the scenarist and as frequently as not rejected in the final cutting. The Germans, under the desperate compulsion to know every capacity of the camera, have actually surpassed us at times in making the camera expressive, i. e., in that very getting a thing on the screen which has been our sole preoccupation. One reason is that they have not attempted to force the camera to record ungrateful material. Assured in advance, and by their own labors, that the work they were asking the camera to do was actually in the province of the mechanism, they could perfect the mechanical detail as well as the artistic whole. We have, to be sure, been spared their bad films, and seen too many of our own mediocre ones; but we have seen enough of their good ones to suspect that they are on the right track. In sum it means only that those directors, of whatever nationality, who conceive of the film as a unit which must be subjected to the capacities of the camera, are the ones who will make the best films. That they will eventually also make the most popular ones is a private heresy of mine. It does, just now, remain to be proved.

GILBERT SELDES.

The Doom of Lulu

THERE were a number of reasons why Wedekind's Erdgeist, produced in New York as The Loves of Lulu, failed so completely of effectiveness. For one thing, it was inadequately acted; and for another, the translation used was so bad as to make it partially unintelligible. But even assuming a bad translation and an indifferent company, it is conceivable that something could have been done with it by playing it for melodrama. The really fatal feature of the performance was perhaps the inertia of the direction. Wedekind's plays are hysterical and tense and should be hysterically and tensely played; but what one got at the Forty-ninth Street Theatre were murders, suicides and storms of passion performed like slowed-up moving pictures. The effect was indescribable: scenes of consternation and violence, like the suicide of the young artist at the end of the third act, went off so lackadaisically that they became meaningless and only made the audience laugh.

In this, however, The Loves of Lulu scarcely offended worse than a good many other plays with better texts and better actors which have been lately seen in the serious theatre. The worst weakness of that theatre in New York seems to lie in its lack of energy. One is naturally far from wanting to belittle such producers as Arthur Hopkins, the Theatre Guild, the Neighborhood and the Provincetown Players: it is to their intelligence and taste that we are indebted for most of what is worth seeing nowadays. But their productions are haunted by a listlessness which makes some of their best things miss fire. One of the most conspicuous victims of this treatment this season was James Joyce's play Exiles at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Joyce no doubt has his deficiencies as a dramatist but from the production of Exiles at the Neighborhood it was a little hard to tell how serious these deficiencies were: the play was performed with a dreariness and a slowness which would have made anything seem boring. In reading Exiles, one had had the impression from the briefness and precision of most of the speeches that they were intended to be delivered rather briskly; but at the Neighborhood the actors paused so long between them that one's attention had a chance to wander—a fatal disaster to a play like Exiles which has so few theatrical baits for the attention. But even Processional, which offers so many, seemed to suffer from a similar lack of vitality: Processional, I take it, was supposed to have been run off with the emphasis and swiftness of a vaudeville show; but certainly the performance I saw, at any rate, had nothing of this character (it was a matinee, to be sure, when all performances are likely to run down). Nor did What Price Glory, for all its great merits, seem very vigorously organized by its director: it was only in the text that one felt any of the pressure and agitation of the war. It is partly this sort of thing, I dare say, which makes it possible for a critic like Mr. Seldes to be deceived by the illusion that the musical shows are intrinsically more impressive than the serious plays: they, at least, like the moving pictures, tend to stimulate the activity of the attention instead of perpetually lagging behind it. What is the good of talking about "rhythm" if you do not teach the actors to take up their cues?

There is, however, perhaps another factor involved, beyond any inefficiency on the part of the director, in our dragging performances. Foreigners visiting the United States are struck by the slowness of American speech, as we have the impression that all Europeans—including the English—speak with excessive rapidity. And the truth is that Americans still drawl—in the city as well as in the country: not even New York, unlike Paris or London, has a language of the quick intelligence. Compare an English company playing Galsworthy or a French company playing Molière with any of the American productions I have mentioned above. One of the things which our theatre needs most is a simple training in precision and speed in the delivery of lines. The lack of it is one of the things which tends to make Shakespeare—or, for that matter, any classical dramatist—impossible in America. We are doing away with the old shifting of elaborate sets which used to steal so much time from Shakespeare; but the fact remains that we cannot manage the lines fast enough to get through more than half the play. Now Shakespeare wrote on a five-act scale and does not justify himself dramatically on any other. (That is why the newspaper critics in New York are always reporting him a bad dramatist: they are doubtless unfamiliar with the printed versions of the plays and not unnaturally conclude from the medley of selections which is presented to them on the stage that Shakespeare was an intolerably careless artist with no instinct for proportion.) And it appears that on the Elizabethan stage they were able to carry off five-act plays because they went through them very rapidly with almost no business and with no intermissions. All the Elizabethan plays were constructed with sub-plots which alternated with the scenes of the main

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drama and served the double purpose of allowing the actors to rest and refreshing the audience's attention. Shakespeare was written to be played in this way and could be played in this way still (with two short intermissions, however, let us say!) if—what seems impossible—American actors could be found to read long stretches of blank verse fast enough: the French have preserved a technique of this kind for their own classical theatre. As a matter of fact, in some ways the most enjoyable production of Shakespeare that the present writer ever saw was The Tempest as given nine or ten years ago at the Century Theatre in which the whole text was played straight through with one set and very brief intermissions.

The last bill at the Neighborhood Playhouse before The Critic was Sooner and Later, a "dance satire" by Irene Lewisohn with music by Emerson Whithorne. Like J. A. Carpenter's Krazy Kat ballet and Cole Porter's Within the Quota, Sooner and Later—perhaps like the latter of these stimulated by the experiments of the Swedish Ballet—was an attempt to write a ballet on an American theme using authentic American material. All endeavors to create an American ballet are interesting: our popular humor (which Mr. Carpenter exploited), our popular music (which Mr. Porter laid under contribution) and our Indian dances (which Mr. Whithorne makes the foundation for the first section of Sooner and Later) may contain the germs of a new sort of entertainment different alike from our present musical shows and from the European ballet. And Sooner and Later was more ambitiously planned than either of its predecessors. But, as it was more elaborate, it was more difficult and turned out, as a whole, less satisfactory than either: Krazy Kat and Within the Quota, though they scarcely pretended to be more than trifles, had a certain finish and point, whereas Sooner and Later seemed rather aimless and loosely strung together. The first part represented the primitive America of the Indians; the second the weary and mechanical New York of today; and the third the sublimated scientific and "crystallized" world of the future. But the significance of the "satire" was not clear; what was supposed to be the point of the contrast? None the less, if not quite an artistic success, Sooner or Later was for the most part entertaining and worth the Neighborhood Playhouse's trouble. The primitive ritual was effective; there was a very felicitous ironical rendering of the monotony and fatigue of New York; and in the last section there was a most amusing use of the color organ, which performed a twentieth century sex-drama in the abstract artistic terms of the future.

If anyone could write the great American jazz ballet, it might perhaps be George Gershwin. With him, the idiom of American popular music is a natural expression, the medium in which he has always worked—not as with Mr. Carpenter or Mr. Whithorne something systematically acquired and overlaid on an academic training. That Gershwin has ambitions beyond his ordinary vein is proved by the Rhapsody in Blue. What has become of the all-American opera about Carmen the cigar-store girl which he was reported to be writing with Ring Lardner? His last production is a summer musical comedy called Tell Me More—a line-for-line, number-for-number attempt to reproduce the success of Lady Be Good with inferior music and inferior actors, which already as I write is rumored to be failing in its purpose.

EDMUND WILSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Shadow of States' Rights

SIR: Federal police power, in spite of the Constitution, is a growing fact. It would develop better if it were not forced to grow in shade.

A year or so ago, when the New Republic and Mr. Felix Frankfurter were concerned to argue that the enforcement of federal prohibition was a matter for the several states, I tried, until you cut me off for loquacity, to protest on this ground. I felt no heat of feeling as to prohibition enforcement itself—a good deal, however, at the assumption that we are saddled in perpetuity with our historic incubus of forty-nine invisible governments, each, in theory, exclusively responsible for the general welfare of a section of population with which it has slight connection and from which it receives scant respect.

I now note that Mr. J. M. Landis has taken you up (in the New Republic for April 29) for arguing for, instead of against, federal police power in another instance. You want the federal government to protect farmers in several states along the Colorado River from non-alcoholic droughts and floods quite as definitely as you wanted it to leave their protection from alcohol to the governments of their respective states. The theoretical exclusion of the federal government from general police power weighs little with you in this instance. It weighs little with anyone when it comes in conflict with his concrete desires or convictions of expediency. Almost all of us freely shift our view of it according to the status of our axe to grind for the time being. It originated as a concession to thirteen lively local patriotisms. State local patriotisms have chilled in about the inverse ratio of the increase of their number of objects—thirteen to forty-nine. The basic "principle" of excluding the national government from comprehensive jurisdiction to provide for the general welfare—the police power—has in consequence become, I believe, an anachronism. It strikes me as artificial to cite it (unless in a technical discussion of constitutionality) as a controlling, or even a weighty, reason against either federal enforcement of prohibition or development of the Colorado.

I do not mean to advocate a tyrannous central regulation of interests which are really local, or to deny the desirability that groups which are actually cohesive enough to be concerned to exercise it should enjoy the fullest local autonomy consistent with the integrity of national policies. But I can see little relation between state boundaries and the boundaries of any actually cohesive groups except those with a vested interest in state offices. It is to the nation that the ordinary citizen looks for government. If the national government is often bad, it is at least comparatively visible. The sum total of attrition of public resources, for example, effected by a spectacular interstate Fall is negligible beside that worked by the incessant unobservable host of intrastate rapids.

WALTER NELLES.

Cos Cob, Conn.

Neighborliness in the City

SIR: The Chelsea Neighbors ask the courtesy of space in your columns through which to request the advice of New Republic readers who may be in a position to answer a question with which they are concerned. This has to do with the developing of a community consciousness and conscience among the residents of one section of a great city like New York. They want to know whether the experience of others justifies the belief that this is practicable, and if so, what are the best methods for bringing it about? The general aim is "to preserve every attractive feature of the neighborhood, to eliminate all shortcomings, and to create new sources of pride and enjoyment for all who live and work" within the district. The specific objectives include such matters as added police protection, better street-cleaning service, the coöperation of factories in eliminating smoke nuisances, backyard gardens, more trees and ivy, exhibitions of work by local artists, and opportunities for self-expression in dramatics, etc.

Can these aims be accomplished without the creation of a general feeling of neighborliness? And can such a feeling be established in a city where the average individual seems to enjoy *not* being a neighbor? Or can a neighborhood association be energized and made effective on some more impersonal basis? We should greatly appreciate suggestions on these points.

MRS. VICTOR O. FREEBURG.
Organizing Secretary, The Chelsea Neighbors.
New York, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Revivals

"IT DATES." It smells of 1779, or 1880, or 1925, it smells of powder, or mothballs, or the newest paint. There is hardly anything more damning to say about a new play, or the revival of an old one. The startling paint dries and peels with time, the bright carpet wears thin, and when another generation pushes the door again, there is the musty air of a room long shut, and on the wall the yellow calendar of a forgotten year. Rare are the plays worth resurrecting for the antique charm of that year, that perfume; rarer still the plays in which living air still moves, as if their author had left a perpetual window open, and with it bestowed upon his house something that cannot die.

A true revival is rare. The first audience of the play has disappeared, and with it most of the original enchantment or excitement. What we revive is not what they saw, but only a fragment of it, a restored, lopsided fragment, unconsciously twisted by our desire to find in the play certain things which perhaps the public of its own day did not suspect, by our lack of interest in other things which to them seemed all-important. To an American audience watching a Shubert de Luxe production of The Mikado, a great deal of what made Gilbert and Sullivan famous simply does not exist. So much else is left that we do not miss what time and place have rubbed away, and the satire, when we notice it at all, often seems incomprehensible or trivial. Yet once upon a time the satire was almost daring, and people talked a good deal at each new volley of Gilbert and Sullivan light arrows musically assaulting some new fad or foolishness of the day. Admirals were indignant, Japanese diplomats protested, the precieux were insulted, Tennysonians cried blasphemy, here a pillar began to wobble, there mockery blew the protective dust off some popular monument. Now all this is gone. Even the words are beginning to go too. The principals, with few exceptions, gargle and spit them out hastily, the choruses drown them in cascades of heavy hearty tunefulness, and only the occasional wreckage of Gilbert's sprightly nonsense is found swirling in a Niagara of Sullivan. But in return for the sinking of Gilbert, no expense is spared. If we lose the neat magic of the verses, we can console ourselves with thousands of dollars' worth of costumes, with literal, elaborate scenery, with the yardage and stale rainbow luxury of any huge musical comedy. Gilbert and Sullivan, a brilliant but outmoded partnership, is gone. Long live Shubert and Sullivan.

Who will carry on the tradition? Who in this dumb receptive audience, looking at something "colorful," hearing something "tuneful," will carry the message home to the piano, and forevermore at family parties, on hay rides or around the fire at marshmallow time, strike envy into the un-entertaining by an enthusiastic but melancholy interpretation of "Willow, Tit-Willow, Tit-Willow"? For The Mikado, like Hamlet, should impress whoever sees it for the first time as astonishingly full of quotations. The pleasure of Gilbert and Sullivan is partly the pleasure of recognition, of hearing from a really high salaried voice, with a real orchestra, and a real Japanese background, the complete version of amateur fireside favorites. It was not only the tunes which delighted these amateurs, the words tickled them and their private audience quite as much, and there were many who could not sing but knew the patter of the songs by heart. Those lightly imperishable words, made fast in the memory by music—after a few more Shubert revivals, they will be gone. They will be as unimportant as the satire, and as soon forgotten.

Partly because it contains almost no quotations, The Princess Ida, compared with The Mikado, seems even and unspirited. But it has not been quoted because there is little in it that stands out. Gilbert is rather flat, and commits pages of smoothy mocking verse, rarely worth laughing at. Sullivan is much more worth listening to, but almost as hard to remember. Very few airs remain distinctly in the ear afterwards, but the total effect is one of graceful, charming melody, unconnected with the words, and utterly remote from the harsh gawdiness of the production.

The wildly funny burlesque of Sheridan's The Critic, as revived by the Neighborhood Playhouse, does not raise the question of "date." A lot of it that had particular point for the eighteenth century playgoer is of course lost on us, but the exorbitant caricature of a bad play and ham actors in rehearsal is close enough to things we see even now for the gap in years not to matter very much. Sheridan's contribution seems much slighter than it must have in his day. The lines are not really up to much and in print the play would seem not much more than a long, long row of convenient bare hooks on which actors and directors of a later day might hang almost any extravagance of farce, comedy, burlesque, any crazy and amusing collection of costumes and business they chose to invent. The Neighborhood Playhouse went the limit. One could imagine The Critic more subtly done, but it is hard to see how it could be made much funnier—particularly thanks to the gifted excesses of Miss Dorothy Sands.

After seeing The Wild Duck, one exclaims at its perpetual youth. These characters will not die until human beings have come to behave entirely differently; their reality is as much a part of us, or even more so, as the world of people that surrounds us. Rosmersholm, as presented by Mr. Edward Goodman's Stagers at the Fifty-second street Theatre, by comparison with The Wild Duck seems to belong to times that are gone or even to times that never existed at all. Here we are plunged into a curious vacuum all the more intense for its chambered remoteness. It is difficult to hold one's breath, especially when the air is thin, for four acts. It is difficult to feel other than an interested outsider in the presence of a spiritual battle which seemed so real to Ibsen and to his people but which must strike us often as a little grotesque. Did that little West Coast town so fiercely, so wholly divided between "reaction" and "liberalism" ever exist? Was there anything solid, were there any citizens, behind that distant contest between opposing mists? The liberalism has not a solitary plank, the reaction not a single specific prejudice. The bones of contention are not bones, but clouds, clouds upon clouds of vague words.

And yet with all this tragedy and strain on some island of the imagination, here too is something of the originality that haunts The Wild Duck, something of its passion and inevitability. In only one instance was the acting in Rosmersholm—in general thin and conscientious—as good as that in The Wild Duck. It was the part of Peter Mortensgard, played exactly right by Mr. Arthur Hughes, played in such a way that this character at any rate came off the island, and did not seem to belong to some lost period, of daguerreotype remoteness, fixed faces, tense voices and horse-hair loyalties.

ROBERT LITTELL.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brains and Lyrics

An Anthology of Pure Poetry, edited with an introduction by George Moore. New York: Boni and Liveright. $2.

New Poems, by John Drinkwater. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company. $2.

First Poems, by Edwin Muir. New York: B. W. Huebsch. $1.50.

Tamar and other poems, by Robinson Jeffers. Peter G. Boyle, Publisher. New York City. $1.50.

Grace after Meat, by John Crowe Ransome, with an introduction by Robert Graves. London: Hogarth Press, 4s. 6d.

Chills and Fever, by John Crowe Ransome. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $1.50.

THE aging sybarite of Ebury Street, although still able to enjoy poetry, if taken in small quantities and at the just moment, finds that his pleasure in it is confined to those poems which are untainted by the intellect. "Shakespeare never soiled his songs with thought," and therefore they are still alive and fresh. It is possible to be sympathetic toward this point of view, but when Mr. Moore declares that the only permanent literature is that which deals objectively with the external world, rebellious questions arise. His definition of pure poetry is "something that the poet creates outside his own personality." But pull the sting of the personal out of a lyric, and what is left? Mr. Moore's collection should be his defense.

What one finds here is an assemblage of poems which, taken separately, as fragments of color, as melodies, are pretty enough. But thus bunched together, in one orris-framed nosegay, they are as cloying as a dish of whipped cream. These objective glimpses of "the sovereign rosemary," and "the keen evening star," these vacuously mournful sounds, these narratives in pastoral and mediæval pasticcio, however gracefully they may address us, speak persistently in the thin tones of a eunuch. The volume includes some of the most delicately lovely madrigals in the English tongue. It foregoes whatever has in it the salt flavor, the tough fibre of primitive human experience, and so cuts off poetry at its thickest root. The only approach to such lyricism is in Shelley's Hymn to Pan and in Tennyson's Mariana, neither of which seems to me to fall strictly within the compiler's definition. If this is a book of "pure poetry," I for one prefer that which is stained and roughened by thought, that which remembers, with anger and pain, the loneliness and impotence of the old, the impotence and loneliness of the young, the breath on our necks of that guttler, death, and the humbling nets of circumstance about our feet.

The examination of half a dozen books of recent verse emphasizes the invalidity of Mr. Moore's canon. Of the four men to be considered here, three might fairly be called metaphysical poets. The fourth, John Drinkwater, devotes half of his tiny book to not unexceptionable translations from German poets of a departed era (Hofmannsthal excepted), and the other half to conventionally pretty, simple, uninteresting tunes. His most ambitious piece, The Atom of God, is an ambiguous and pretentious fable concerning man divining his own godhead. Beside the rigorously intellectual experiments of John Crowe Ransome, the tragically beautiful work of that astounding newcomer, Robinson Jeffers, the wistful solemnities of young Edwin Muir, Mr. Drinkwater's Muse glides, as dainty and unimportant as a Backfisch.

Mr. Muir's First Poems, in spite of their constant personal reference, might possibly engage a lover of "pure poetry" because of the clarity with which he beholds the visual earth. He has the Wordsworthian touch, a sense of natural grandeur, a strong awareness of what I should like to call the ab-urban world, not common to his day and generation. But his verse is too plainly infected with philosophy to please those sharing Mr. Moore's dangerous prejudice. Here is a young man who stands "self-tranced between the earth and sky," enchanted by luminous shape and sculptured shadow, seeing even the heavy plough-horse as though it were a terrible, eternal, resplendent Idea—a young man bowed down, in the heart of his Platonic universe, by thoughts of human estrangement and the world's decay. His mood, and even his manner, have a closer affinity to that of the Germans, like Werfel and Wilhelm Klemm, than to our own. Even Muir's ballads, which are not lacking in charm and vigor, do not escape metaphysic, as may be testified by such titles as Ballad of Rebirth, Ballad of Eternal Life.

In Robinson Jeffers we find a poet concerned, like Muir, with the cosmos in which man is but a momentary flicker, but the magnificent strophes of this strangely obscure poet show a richer maturity. This reviewer, reading Jeffers, felt somewhat as Keats professed to feel, on looking into Chapman's Homer. Nothing is discoverable of the man save that he lives on the Pacific coast and was published by a New York linotyper, Peter Boyle, whose name should go down laurelled in the annals of American literature. The opening poem, Tamar, is a powerful dramatic narrative on the stern Greek model, given a native setting and written in a free verse that has in it the long roll and swing of the elder seas. Jeffers has his own style, which is worthy of his high moods and gnarled thinking. For there is thinking in these lyrics, which lifts them out of the category attractive to Mr. Moore, and on to the plane of great writing. It is possible not to share the Oriental philosophy expressed in certain of his poems, but it is impossible to have strong poetry without the force of some equal conviction beating like a heart in its body. Jeffers himself tells us what the stuff of a poem must be:

> Permanent things are what is needful in a poem, things temporally
> Of great dimension, things continually renewed in her past and future;
> Fashionable and momentary things we need not see nor speak of.
>
> Man gleaning food between the solemn presences of land and ocean,
> On shores where better men have shipwrecked, under fog and among flowers,
>
> Equals the mountains in his past and future. . . .

Permanent things—bound together in a cosmic pattern, as Jeffers binds them—permanent things, edged with the light of our new knowledge of the world—permanent things torn up from the sea-floor of emotion and giving off the aromatic odors of fossil resin in the fires of the poet's mind. That is what one is granted in such work as this—work that is hard and cool and precious as amber, and like amber, charged with electricity. Here is a solitary example:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Cycle

The clapping blackness of the wings of pointed cormorants, the great indolent planes
Of autumn pelicans nine or a dozen strung shorelong,
But chiefly the gulls, the cloud-caligraphers of windy spirals before a storm,
Cruise north and south over the sea-rocks and over
That bluish enormous opal; very lately these alone, these and the clouds
And westering lights of heaven, crossed it; but then
A hull with standing canvas crept about Point Lobos . . . now all day long the steamers
Smudge the opal's rim; often a sea-plane troubles
The seawind with its throbbing heart. These will increase, the others diminish; and later
These will diminish; our Pacific have pastured
The Mediterranean torch and passed it west across the fountains of the morning;
And the following desolation that feeds on Crete
Feed here; the clapping blackness of the wings of pointed cormorants, the great sails
Of autumn pelicans, the gray sea-going gulls,
Alone will streak the enormous opal, the earth have peace like the broad water, our blood's
Unrest have doubled to Asia and be peopling
Europe again, or dropping colonies at the morning star: what moody traveller
Wanders back here, watches the sea-fowl circle
The old sea-granite and cemented granite with one regard, and greets my ghost,
One temper with the granite, bulking about here?

Less granitic, perhaps, but no less thoughtful, are the productions of another newly arrived poet, John Crowe Ransome. He has of course had far wider recognition than Jeffers: he has been awarded at least two prizes, and, what is more notable for an American, been published in England. Robert Graves, who writes the introduction to the London volume, finds Ransome "doing for his own state (Tennessee) what Frost has done for New England, Vachel Lindsay for his Middle-West, and Carl Sandburg for Chicago." For a measure of Ransome's work such an estimate holds good, but a rich, potent, sublety-spinning irony, by LaForgue out of T. S. Eliot, is more obvious in these startlingly brilliant lyrics than any homelier influence. Ransome's technique is not the least interesting of his several gifts. In this connection, it would be instructive to examine the apparently slight, but usually important, differences in two versions of some ten of his poems. But space forbids. It forbids also the extensive quoting demanded by these highly wrought and deeply thought pieces. The man has an extraordinary ability to sustain both wit and emotion, and yet to leave his audience more moved by his achievement than amazed at his dexterity. He is as strict, as difficult, and as rewarding as the noble game which is said to have been invented by the Indian Buddhists as a moral equivalent for war, and which may outlive a diversion that modern inventions have rendered somewhat tedious. Adventure This Side Pluralism, narratives such as Judith of Bethulia or Wrestling, that eloquent piece of criticism: An American Addresses Philomela—these long, if close-knit, poems show Ransome at his best. If his quality is briefly to be tasted, it may be had in the following sonnet, Good Ships:

Fleet ships encountering on the high seas
Who speak, and unto eternity diverge—
These hailed each other, poised on the loud surge
Of one of Mrs. Grundy's Tuesday teas,
Nor trimmed one sail to baffle the driving breeze.
A macaroon absorbed all her emotion;
His hue was ashy, but an effect of ocean;
They exchanged the nautical technicalities.

It was only a nothing or so, and thus they parted;
Away they sailed, most certainly bound for port,
So seaworthy, one felt they could not sink;
Still there was a tremor shook them, I should think,
Beautiful timbers fit for stormy sport
And into miserly merchant hulks converted.

One wonders in passing, if no tremor would shake Mr. Moore, were he to depart so far from his customary pleasures as to read these three diverse, powerful, and pregnant-minded poets.

BABETTE DEUTSCH.

Grooming the Universe

An Introduction to Philosophy, by Edgar Sheffield Brightman. New York: Henry Holt and Company. pp. 393. $3.

The World and Its Meaning; an Introduction to Philosophy, by G. T. W. Patrick. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. pp. 463. $3.50.

A Course in Philosophy, by George Perrigo Conger. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. pp. 603. $3.75.

"THIS book," says Professor Brightman, "is an introduction to philosophy. It presupposes no prior acquaintance with the subject and is intended either for the student or the general reader." It therefore presupposes further a general eagerness for instruction in philosophy among persons who do not care to study. So does each one of these introductions. So, indeed, do all introductions to philosophy. Why? I cannot believe that the demand for philosophical textbooks has been so great among the ten (or is it twenty?) million readers of Harold Bell Wright, or even among the five million readers of the Saturday Evening Post or the two million readers of the Literary Digest; no, not even among the odd hundreds of thousands who read the Atlantic Monthly, to fire professors of philosophy with the ambition to become popular authors. Then whence cometh the expectation of "general" readers? No savant adjusting the last rough breathing sign on the last galley proof of his introduction to the study of Greek grammar would think of penning a prefatory billet doux to the casual reader who, though not caring to study, might nevertheless enjoy a perusal of the book. No mathematician would think of summoning a general public to his introduction to the differential calculus, however little previous knowledge of the subject the first chapter might assume. But things are otherwise with the philosopher. A larger world, he believes, takes an interest in the issue of his thought, a world eager to know "What is the end and aim of life?" (Such, at all events, is the bait dangled by the publisher before one of these three books.) 'Twere folly not to read "an interpretation of life's meaning"!

This must be admitted to be true. Life's meaning, not to say its end and aim, is certainly a matter of general concern. It is also the matter with which philosophy is supposed by everyone to deal. The perennial indifference of the general reader (and, I fear, of most of the special readers who do fatigue duty through these manuals) is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

owing not to any doubts about the importance of the aim and end of life but to intuitive suspicion of professors and even of philosophy. After all, the important question is not whether philosophy deals with the secrets of life but whether it solves them. Academic personages somehow fail to inspire conviction at this point.

This is partly the inevitable fate of the pedagogue which professors of philosophy share with linguists and scientists. Assume that a very good reason exists for everyone's mastering the differential calculus. As a matter of fact, it does. Science being the most potent single force in modern civilization, every intelligent man and cultivated woman ought to be as well read in bacteriology and colloid chemistry as he pretends to be in Shakespeare and Corneille. The principal obstacle to scientific literacy is ignorance of the language in which science is written, namely mathematics—an obstacle no more troublesome than the French language, which cultivated people take for granted. Even suppose that cultivated people were aware of their deficiency in this respect (which is unthinkable, they being of all people in the world the least conscious of any of their deficiencies). Still it does not follow that the sale of college textbooks on calculus would be increased. The way to learn French is to be brought up by a French governess and later to loaf much in France. The way to learn the calculus is to be a chemist or a physicist or an engineer or an architect, and to have to use it in your business. The textbook way is the imitation way, the way of let's pretend: a snack of rules and then long rows of examples in the doing of which you pretend that you want to find out things (involving the given principles) although as matter of fact you have no such desire but only the wish to get through and done with it.

The fatal defect of schools, from which not even an introduction to the interpretation of life's meaning can escape, is their unreality. The only real problem with which any school presents its pupils is the problem of getting through school. The only real interest in any textbook is an interest in getting up a subject for examination. Stop a moment and consider the tables of contents of these three books. There is something suspicious about their uniformity. Every one "covers" the subject. Every one resumes the "historic" problems of philosophy, every one canvasses the universe from protons to fixed stars, every one sets up all the leading "schools" of contemporary thought in a convivial tea party of intellectual dummies. In addition, of course, each has its own peculiar note of optimism about the universe. Professor Patrick is "realistic and pluralistic, and, I hope, theistic; certainly idealistic, and quite unmistakably optimistic." In short, what-you-wishtic. Professor Brightman is plain theistic and be damned to you. There are critics, he says, who "will reject, without careful examination, any philosophy, no matter how reasonable, if it be inclined to find some truth in religion." To avoid mistake and have all the cards on the table he proceeds to make a face at such bigots in his preface. Professor Conger is developing a new philosophy, that of epitomization. The stars epitomize the atoms, vertebrates epitomize animalculae, the soul epitomizes God. Thus all three of these introductions run the same course not only in the arrangements of their contents but in epitomizing modern "liberal" theology.

This is a limitation, however, for which philosophy must take the blame. The introduction to differential calculus, with all its pedagogical shortcomings, does at least introduce differential culculus. But whereas the general reader is tempted with the mystery of the end and aim of life, what he is introduced to is the writings of ancient and contemporary philosophers. The contents of their stomachs are emptied before him in an orderly and well classified but not a palatable array. Wishing to understand life's meaning he is told what Aristotle thought and what the neo-realists have asseverated in opposition to the neo-something else. These matters are all of absorbing interest to the neo's. One way be very sure of this: each of these books will be a great assistance to some teachers. But what those teachers are teaching and what these professors are studying is not life but the writings of philosophers. Learning, to a professor of philosophy, is not knowing what is to be known about the universe, but knowing the arguments for (or against) one (or many), mechanism (or vitalism), universals (or particulars). In short, such books are exactly what they say they are: introductions not to life but to phliosophy.

No one knows this better than professors of philosophy, and not to understand that is to do them great injustice. If philosophy in its ascertaining of the truth about life's meaning has fallen somewhat behind the disciplines which seek the truth about rough breathing and the differential calculus, that is because life's meaning is a rather obscure matter. So obscure is it, indeed, that the claim cannot be made that any understanding of it is certain as a mathematical formula is certain. Philosophy is the attempt to understand a mystery which always remains a mystery still. To that task many noble minds have brought the finest wisdom of which this race is capable. What they have had to say has resembled more closely the intuitions of an artist than the cumulative discoveries of a scientist. But not everyone is similarly gifted. Any tyro can know as much as Newton about calculus, but who can claim to be as wise as Kant? A sufficient answer to this question can be found in Who's Who, where you will find mathematicians and physicists in plenty, but never a "philosopher." The followers of that muse set themselves down more humbly as university professors. They are but pedagogues. Yet they also thrill to the immensity of the enigma of life's meaning. Their pathetic appeal to the general readers who never read is their unconscious tribute to life's mystery!

C. E. Ayres.

Stories of New Russia

Flying Osip, Short stories by nine Russian authors. New York: International Publishers. $2.

THIS book has to do with lawbreakers; not those who break laws, but those who break The Law, to remold it nearer to their dream. It is written by lawbreakers, the spokesmen of New Russia. And appropriately, Lawbreakers is the title of its best story.

In the last case the name denotes young incorrigibles cast adrift by the sequence of war, famine and plague, to prey upon society and to be hounded in exchange. These children, who unite in gangs with Robin Hood organization and activities to match, constitute one of Russia's grave problems. The best answer so far has been found in such a community as Lydia Seifulina describes: a farm colony where the waifs are restrained, fed, and if possible converted into citizens. It is a new movement, a daring movement, and within limits a successful one. But in order to carry on, each section requires unending effort, adequate funds, and the guidance of a genius-personality.

No special article could stress these demands with greater decision. At the same time, Lawbreakers is not propagand-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ist literature in the evil sense. Its relation to a cause is as legitimate as Oliver Twist's, and much less sentimental. It suffers no artistic loss from the fact that it supplements the work of such agents as Anna Louise Strong.

The other bulky undertaking in the book is Hunger, which diaries starvation in Petrograd much as Knut Hamsun described a similar experience. But instead of an individual ravaged in the midst of plenty, this pictures a group crushed by famine. It is one of those records whose simplicity carries grim conviction.

The remaining sketches are mere episodes or anecdotes, horrible and comic, political and social. All are tinged with the journalistic interest which any valid report from Russia is bound to hold just now. But the new literature heralded by blurb is not to be found among this collection. Their message is rather that Russia may change from white to red and the muzhik become a comrade, but underneath, the folk remains the same. And its expression is similar. So marked is the resemblance between old and "new" that the first three sketches by Kasatkin and Shishkov might have been inserted in War and Peace or included in The Black Monk with no one the wiser. Where there is a contrast it is less in how the thing is told than in what there is to tell.

Which is not to minimize the contribution of the International Publishers. We need help in blowing away the fog that makes Russia a mere name to most of us. The fact that it might be old friends writing of the new régime is a guarantee rather than an indictment.

BETSY GREENEBAUM.

Mrs. Meynell

Mrs. Meynell and Her Literary Generation, by Anne Kimball Tuell. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

FEW would feel inclined to allocate to Alice Meynell a day and generation all her own, for her product is at once so scanty and so delicate—four small bound volumes constituting her self-selected baggage for futurity. When it comes to recalling the 90's of the last century, one thinks rather of the intricacies of Meredith and the final efflorescences of Tennyson; of the truculences of Henley in The National Observer and the dubieties of Beardsley in The Yellow Book; or even, in the lesser kind, of the tenebrae of Francis Thompson and the domestic transcendencies of the venerated Coventry Patmore. However, any head on canvas may be made to fill, for a brief time and for some special purpose, the major space, while other heads appear lessened behind and around it. This is the course that Miss Tuell, in her labor of love, has chosen to pursue.

The subordinate heads are those already named, and they serve to define the niche which Mrs. Meynell occupied in her own generation and to indicate some of the most important relations that she established. Amidst these blazing stars and these smoky torches she choicely and unhesitantly upheld her slender taper. She upheld it trimly, too: no smudge, no guttering. The best of her heritage came from a reticent and tasteful father. She never said too much, and she never said it with overemphasis. Of course her art was highly self-conscious; and of course she wrote without much dependence upon casual inspiration. Her minor journalistic labors, as reported in her biographer's bibliography, were comprehensive and constant: four times four volumes would have been less than the tale, had this author been so minded. Furthermore, in the thick of the London world, "she was fortunate to encounter editors who would let her say what she pleased, and a public willing to read what she was pleased to say." In this world she paradoxically held out for literary solitude, and indulged for the group-instinct in letters "something more than disdain, something very like fear."

Her activities fell in the time when the mot juste, lately imported from France, enjoyed full sway. Oddly enough, she accepted its rule more completely for her verse than for her prose. In her essays she inclined to let the verbal stream find its own way, though preciosity, it is not to be denied, attended her on the banks. Her stylistic rigor and self-consciousness are best apprehended through her verse; here, too, one finds mentality as opposed to sensuousness. The simple poetry of primary passion, she herself declared, belongs to a past age; "modern poetry should be complex and have mental charm." She brought mentality to her emotional verse. She harked back to the Catholic poets of the seventeenth century—her preferred period—and may be accepted as a latest link that leads down from Crashaw.

Miss Tuell's attitude is that of frankly admiring discipleship. She had the advantage of close personal association with Mrs. Meynell, and she has toned a well-studied style into close harmony with that of her friend. Quotations from the essays are abundant, and there is a notable accordance between the two pens. The binding of the volume is conspicuously suited to subject and contents; but it is a pity that composition and presswork (done in the United States) should be so inferior to that of most of the Dutton importations.

HENRY B. FULLER.

American Colonial Architecture; Its Origin and Development, by Joseph Jackson. Philadelphia: David McKay. $2.

AN excellent book for the general reader. It treats of processes and forms as they were affected by different regional conditions, and, unique among the books that deal with colonial architecture, it touches also upon the early buildings of Canada. The illustrations are sufficient and varied.

L. M.

Contributors

CHARLES MERZ was graduated from Yale in 1915. He has been a member of the editorial staff of the New Republic, Harper's Weekly, and the New York World.

FRANK SIMONDS, journalist, is the author of They Shall Not Pass—Verdun, 1916, and A History of the World War in five volumes.

FREDERIC NELSON is an editorial writer on The Hartford Times.

GILBERT SELDES is the author of The Seven Lively Arts, and is a frequent contributor to magazines. He was formerly managing editor of The Dial.

BABETTE DEUTSCH is the author of a volume of poems, Banners, and with her husband, Avrahm Yarmolinsky, is the translator of Modern Russian Poetry, An Anthology. Her new book of poems, Honey Out of the Rock, will appear in the fall.

BETSY GREENEBAUM is a graduate of the University of Chicago. She is at present a writer with the Fairchild Publications, New York.

HENRY B. FULLER, novelist, contributes frequent reviews to the New Republic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED